MASTERING
LITERATURE

Comprehensive Lesson Notes for Teachers and Students

Capt. John Baraka

Central Literature Committee

The Mycropost Universe

Whoever desires for his writings or himself, what none can reasonably condemn, the favor of mankind, must add grace to strength, and make his thoughts agreeable as well as useful. Many complain of neglect who never tried to attract regard. It cannot be expected that the patrons of science or virtue should be solicitous to discover excellences which they who possess them shade and disguise. Few have abilities so much needed by the rest of the world as to be caressed on their own terms; and he that will not condescend to recommend himself by external embellishments must submit to the fate of just sentiments meanly expressed, and be ridiculed and forgotten before he is understood.

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CAPT. JOHN BARAKA

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
1. INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE	2
i) Overview of the Term Literature	2
ii) Functions and Importance of Literature	4
iii) Forms of Literature	7
iv) Language and Literature	14
v) Literary Devices	18
vi) Basic Elements of Literature	55
2. ORAL LITERATURE	66
3. WRITTEN LITERATURE	72

VOLUME 2 contains an in-depth analyses of literary works such as Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine*, Ferdinand Oyono's *Houseboy* and *The Old Man and the Medal*, Alex La Guma's *A Walk in the Night and Other Stories*, Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* and *The Trials of Brother Jero*, Nikolai Gogol's *The Government Inspector*, Ama Ata Aidoo's *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, David Rubadiri's *Growing up with Poetry* as well as *Selected Poems* by Tanzania Institute of Education. Explore the **E-Shop** for More!

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INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE

WHAT IS LITERATURE?

Defining literature is an act of capturing its essence from multiple angles. It is not a singular entity but a complex interplay of artistic, communicative, and cultural elements. The following definitions, when taken together, provide a holistic understanding.

1. Literature is a form of **art** that uses **language** as its medium, where **creativity** is applied to both **form** (structure, style, genre) and **content** (story, ideas, characters) to produce an object of **aesthetic** value, intended to evoke emotion, pleasure, or intellectual engagement beyond mere utility.
2. Literature is a refined use of **language** to convey a significant **message** about human experience, identity, or condition. This artistic communication acts as a mirror and a lamp for **society**, reflecting its realities, critiquing its flaws, and imagining its possibilities, thereby preserving and challenging cultural values.
3. Literature is the enduring artistic expression of a people's consciousness, whether transmitted through the dynamic, performative **creativity** of the spoken word (oral tradition) or the fixed, reflective **form** of the written text. In both modes, it employs the **aesthetics** of **language**—rhythm, imagery, narrative—to shape **content** that carries a **message** of consequence for the individual and the **society**.
4. Literature is the **creative** process and its product, wherein **language** is sculpted with artistic intent. It involves a deliberate selection and arrangement of words (form) to give meaningful shape to ideas, stories, and emotions (content), resulting in a work that prioritizes aesthetic impact and thematic depth.
5. Literature is a work of art that uses language creatively to reflect or express human realities to the society. Literary works often explore themes and issues of human experience, and can serve to entertain, challenge, liberate, or enlighten readers.

Core Conceptual Integration:

- **Art & Creativity:** It is a made thing, requiring imaginative construction.
- **Language:** This is its raw material and tool.
- **Aesthetics:** It is concerned with beauty, pattern, and affective power.
- **Message & Content:** It carries meaning, insight, and commentary.
- **Society:** It exists in and responds to a communal context.
- **Form & Content:** These are inseparable; *how* something is said is part of *what* is said.

KEY TERMS USED IN LITERATURE

- **Art**: The creative expression of human imagination, emotion, or perspective through different forms of language.
- **Creativity**: The use of imagination or original ideas to produce something new or innovative.
- **Language**: The system of communication or expression that involves the use of words, scripts, or symbols to convey meaning.
- **Aesthetic**: The appreciation and perception of beauty or artistic appeal in literary works. It can also refer to the principles or theories of beauty, harmony, and art.
- **Message**: The main idea or central theme that the author intends to convey through the story, characters, or symbols. It's an underlying theme or conclusion to be drawn from a literary work. **For example**: *The main message of the novel is that time heal all wounds.*
- **Society**: The social structures, institutions, values, and customs that influence the characters or events in the story.
- **Form**: (***Style, Design and Arrangement***) The structure, manner, pattern, or style of a literary

work as distinct from its content. It can include elements such as plot, character, setting, style, language and point of view.

- **Content**: (***The material dealt with***) The substance, meaning, or subject matter of a literary work. It can include the themes, symbols, motifs, and ideas that are explored in the text as distinct from its form or style.

WHY LITERATURE IS CONSIDERED AN ART

Literature is universally classified as a fine art because it is a creative expression that employs a set of aesthetic principles to evoke emotion, provoke thought, and represent human experience in a structured, imaginative form. Like a sculptor shaping clay or a composer arranging notes, the literary artist deliberately crafts various elements to achieve beauty, meaning, and impact.

1. **Artistic Use of Language (Diction & Style):** The writer, like a painter with a palette, selects words not just for meaning, but for their sound, rhythm, connotation, and aesthetic effect. This deliberate crafting of language is called style. Example: **Chinua Achebe's** prose masterfully blends standard English with Igbo proverbs and syntactic structures ("The sun rose *skinny* and *anemic*"), creating a uniquely resonant style that is itself artistic. Conversely, **Ben Okri** employs a lyrical, hallucinatory prose in *The Famished Road* that transforms language into an incantation.
2. **Character as Sculpted Persona:** Characters in literature are not random imitations of people but carefully designed constructs. The author sculpts their psychology, motivations, flaws, and arcs to serve the theme and engage the reader. Example: **Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*** is a tragic figure whose hyper-masculinity, fear of weakness, and rigid pride are meticulously carved by Achebe to explore the clash of cultures and the nature of change. His character is a complex work of art in human form.
3. **Plot as Designed Architecture (Choice & Presentation of Incidents):** The sequence of events—what is included, omitted, revealed, or withheld—is a conscious architectural design. It builds tension, creates symbolism, and delivers thematic payoff. Example: **Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor's *Dust*** uses a fragmented, non-linear plot, where incidents from Kenya's past and present are artfully juxtaposed like pieces of a mosaic, forcing the reader to actively assemble the story and its meaning, much like interpreting abstract art.
4. **Setting as Painted Canvas:** The selection and description of time and place go beyond mere backdrop. They are painted with words to establish mood, reflect character psychology, or operate symbolically. Example: **Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's depiction of Ilmorog in *Petals of Blood*** evolves from a drought-stricken, dying village to a polluted, industrialized town. This transformation is an artistic representation of post-colonial disillusionment, where the setting itself becomes a central character and a powerful visual metaphor.
5. **Title as Thematic Prism:** A literary title is a carefully chosen, often symbolic, entry point that frames the entire work. It condenses its essence, poses a question, or establishes a motif. Example: **Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*** is a brilliantly artistic title. The possessive "'s" immediately inverts the apartheid power dynamic, making the white Smales family the belonging of their Black servant, July. It encapsulates the novel's core exploration of usurped identities.
6. **Figurative Language as Ornamentation & Insight:** Metaphors, similes, personification, and symbolism are the ornamental devices that elevate prose and poetry beyond the literal. They create layers of meaning and startling visual or conceptual beauty. Example: In **Wole Soyinka's poem "Death in the Dawn,"** the line "A bloody egg sun/ Glistens on the perch of heaven" uses a shocking, vivid metaphor to describe a sunrise witnessed after a fatal accident, merging beauty with horror in an artistically profound way.
7. **Theme as Conceptual Core:** The exploration of central ideas (love, justice, freedom, identity) is not haphazard but is the conceptual core around which all other artistic elements are organized. The artistry lies in how subtly or powerfully this exploration is rendered. Example: **Mariama Bâ's *So Long a Letter*** artistically explores the theme of female solidarity and resilience through

the intimate, epistolary form, making the private reflection of Ramatoulaye a universal artistic statement on women's condition.

8. **Structure as Musical Composition:** The arrangement of chapters, stanzas, acts, and scenes follows a rhythm and pace designed to create specific emotional and intellectual effects. It can be symphonic (building to a crescendo) or discordant (to disturb). Example: **Christopher Okigbo's sequence *Labyrinths*** uses a complex, cyclical structure influenced by musical movements and ritual incantation, where themes and images recur and evolve with artistic precision.
9. **Point of View as Framing Technique:** The chosen perspective (first-person, third-person omniscient, etc.) is an artistic decision that controls the reader's access to information and dictates the story's intimacy or scope. Example: **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*** uses a close third-person perspective centered on Ifemelu, an artistic choice that allows for deep psychological insight while also enabling sharp, satirical commentary on race in America and Nigeria through her blog posts.
10. **Unity of Effect (The Whole as Greater than Parts):** Ultimately, all these elements are synthesized to create a unified, coherent experience—an emotional or intellectual impact that is greater than the sum of its parts. This deliberate synthesis for a singular effect is the hallmark of all art. Example: **Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born*** achieves a powerful, depressing unity of effect. The claustrophobic prose, the focus on decay and excrement, the trapped protagonist, and the bleak setting all coalesce artistically to create an overwhelming sense of post-independence moral and social suffocation.

FUNCTIONS OF LITERATURE IN THE SOCIETY

- To educate people; by inculcating them with sense of awareness and self-activation. It develops the mind of people by giving them knowledge on the existing social realities, as it makes the person to reason.
- To entertain the people by the use of aesthetic pleasure that stimulates the sense of enjoyment. It is through reading, listening and watching literary works like novels, plays and films or movies.
- To develop language as it uses language as the medium of presentation, then people develop language or communicative skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. It improves the stock of vocabulary and grammar.
- To liberate people physically and mentally as it directs people towards their problems, they may decide to liberate themselves through struggles as it awakens and informs them of the social realities.
- To criticize the society or people as it points out the weaknesses, follies, vices and evils of the society as well as giving out good things as the views of what the society should do away from the existing circumstances.
- To express people's culture which includes values, norms, customs, beliefs, language etc. It makes or promotes good or useful aspects of culture. Also, it makes people abandon bad practices, norms and beliefs.
- To influence people towards changes. People may be influenced to act or do things in some ways after reading or watching literary works. It instills revolutionary ideas.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING LITERATURE

Studying literature is far more than an academic exercise; it is a vital engagement with the human condition. Its importance resonates across personal development, cultural understanding, and intellectual capacity.

1. **Fosters Empathy and Emotional Intelligence:** Literature immerses us in the inner lives of characters from diverse backgrounds, circumstances, and cultures. By walking in another's shoes through narrative, we develop the capacity to understand and share the feelings of others. Example: Reading **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun***, we don't just learn

about the Biafran War; we feel the fear, love, and desperation of Ugwu, Olanna, and Richard. This cultivates a profound empathy that transcends geographical and historical boundaries.

2. **Preserves and Transmits Cultural Heritage:** Literature acts as a permanent repository for a people's values, history, myths, and worldview. It ensures that cultural identity is not lost to time or oppression. Example: **Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*** was written explicitly to counter colonial narratives and preserve a complex, dignified record of pre-colonial Igbo society—its justice systems, religious beliefs, and social rhythms—for future generations.
3. **Develops Critical Thinking and Analytical Skills:** Literature is not passive. It demands that readers analyze motives, deconstruct symbols, evaluate arguments within narratives, and discern underlying themes. Example: Interpreting the multifaceted symbolism of the **"mat" in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood***—representing tradition, exploited labor, and woven-together destinies—requires and hones sophisticated analytical reasoning.
4. **Enhances Language Proficiency and Communication:** Exposure to rich, varied, and innovative use of language expands vocabulary, improves grasp of syntax, and models powerful communication. Example: Studying the eloquent proverbs woven into Achebe's prose or the lyrical, rhythmical poetry of **Syl Cheney-Coker** provides a masterclass in using language with precision, beauty, and persuasive power.
5. **Explores Universal and Timeless Themes:** Literature grapples with fundamental human questions—love, death, justice, power, identity, suffering, and joy—that are relevant across ages and cultures. Example: **Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*** explores the conflict between individual duty and communal sacrifice, a theme as relevant to ancient Greek tragedy as it is to modern ethical dilemmas.
6. **Promotes Social Critique and Awareness:** Authors often use their work to critique social ills, injustices, and political failures, awakening readers' consciousness and inspiring reform. Example: **Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born*** offers a searing critique of post-independence corruption in Ghana, forcing readers to confront the moral decay within new political systems.
7. **Stimulates Imagination and Creativity:** Literature opens doors to worlds beyond our immediate reality, whether through realistic fiction, speculative futures, or magical realms. It exercises the mind's capacity to imagine alternatives. Example: **Ben Okri's *The Famished Road***, with its spirit-child narrator and blending of the physical and spiritual worlds, stretches the imagination and challenges Western realist conventions, offering a uniquely African mode of creative perception.
8. **Provides Historical Insight and Perspective:** Literature offers a visceral, human-centric entry point into historical periods, complementing dry factual records with emotional and social truth. Example: **Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*** provides a terrifyingly plausible insight into the psychological and social upheaval of a collapsing apartheid regime, far beyond what a history textbook might convey.
9. **Strengthens Ethical and Moral Reasoning:** By presenting complex characters in difficult situations, literature poses moral dilemmas without clear answers, inviting readers to refine their own ethical frameworks. Example: In **Mariama Bâ's *So Long a Letter***, Ramatoulaye grapples with betrayal, polygamy, and independence, compelling readers to consider questions of forgiveness, women's rights, and tradition within a specific Islamic Senegalese context.
10. **Cultivates Self-Reflection and Personal Growth:** Through identifying with characters' struggles and triumphs, readers gain insights into their own lives, motivations, and potentials. Literature serves as a mirror. Example: Reading **Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood***, many confront the societal pressures on women, the meaning of fulfillment, and the cost of conformity, prompting deep personal reflection on gender roles and personal ambition.

THE CONTEXTUAL APPLICATION OF LITERATURE IN SOCIETY

Literature does not exist in a vacuum. It is created, performed, and utilized within specific societal contexts, fulfilling various roles from ritual to revolution.

1. **Political Context:** Literature is a powerful tool for propaganda, resistance, and nation-building. It can legitimize power or subvert it. Example: **South African Anti-Apartheid Poetry** (by Mongane Serote, Dennis Brutus) was a weapon of struggle, mobilizing resistance and articulating the demand for freedom. Conversely, state-sponsored plays or poems might be used to promote nationalist ideologies.
2. **Economic Context:** Literature reflects and critiques economic realities—class disparity, poverty, corruption, and the impact of global markets. Example: **Ousmane Sembène's *God's Bits of Wood*** chronicles the epic railway strike in colonial Senegal-Mali, placing the struggle for fair wages and workers' rights at its core. Modern African novels often explore the complexities of globalization and informal economies.
3. **Social Context:** Literature addresses and shapes discourse on social issues like gender equality, class conflict, generational gaps, and urban vs. rural life. Example: **Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*** pioneered the African literary feminist tradition by centering on the social and economic struggles of women in Igbo society, challenging purely patriarchal narratives.
4. **Religious/Spiritual Context:** Literature is used to explore faith, doubt, syncretism, and the role of the sacred in everyday life. It can be devotional, theological, or critical. Example: The poetry of **Lebanese-African poet Khalil Gibran** explores mystical spirituality. In African drama, the conflict between traditional deities and foreign religions is a recurrent theme, as seen in works by **Soyinka** or **J.P. Clark**.
5. **Familial Context:** Literature dissects the dynamics of marriage, parenthood, sibling rivalry, and ancestral legacy. It serves as a guide, a caution, or a reflection of family life. Example: **Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*** meticulously examines the pressures within a Shona family, focusing on the education of daughters and the complex web of obligations and resentments between relatives.
6. **Rites of Passage Contexts:**
    - **Weddings:** Praise poetry (*oriki* in Yoruba culture, *izibongo* in Zulu) is performed to celebrate lineages, bless the union, and entertain guests. Songs and chants offer social commentary on marriage.
    - **Funerals:** Elegies, dirges, and lamentation poetry are central to mourning and commemoration across Africa. They honor the deceased, console the living, and mediate the passage of the spirit to the ancestor realm. Example: The **Akan *Awerehyia*** song is a specific genre of lament.
    - **Initiation:** Stories, songs, and proverbs are used during initiation ceremonies (like circumcision schools) to impart esoteric knowledge, cultural values, and adult responsibilities to initiates.
7. **Educational Context:** Literature is a primary vehicle for teaching morality, history, and social norms, especially in oral societies. Proverbs and fables are used to correct behavior and instill wisdom. Example: The **tortoise in Anansi/Ananse folktales** serves as a didactic tool, teaching lessons about cleverness, greed, and consequence.
8. **Therapeutic/Healing Context:** Literature and narrative can be used for healing trauma, expressing grief, and achieving catharsis. **Bibliotherapy** uses reading for psychological healing. Example: Post-genocide Rwandan literature, like works by **Scholastique Mukasonga**, serves as a vital process of witnessing, mourning, and memorializing to aid national and personal healing.
9. **Entertainment and Leisure Context:** At its most fundamental, literature provides enjoyment, suspense, and escape. Griots/storytellers have always been central to community entertainment, as are modern novels, plays, and spoken word poetry performances in urban cafes.

10. **Judicial/Legal Context:** In traditional settings, proverbs, wise sayings, and precedents set in stories are often cited in village courts or by elders to mediate disputes and justify rulings, linking law to narrative wisdom.

FORMS OF LITERATURE

Literature, the art of written or spoken word, is broadly categorized into two major forms:

1. **Oral Literature:** This is literature that is transmitted by word of mouth from one generation to another. It is performed and includes forms like myths, legends, proverbs, folktales, songs, and chants. Its lifeblood is memory, performance, and communal participation.
2. **Written Literature:** This is literature that is physically recorded using a writing system. It is preserved in fixed forms like books, manuscripts, and digital texts. It allows for complex, individual expression, intricate plotting, and private consumption.

ORAL LITERATURE

Oral literature, also known as oral tradition, refers to the types of literary works that are transmitted orally from one generation to another, either through storytelling or song and may include myths, legends, folktales, proverbs, riddles, chants, songs, epics, ballads, poetry, parables etc. Here are some of the genres or forms of oral literature:

- **Myths**: Myths are traditional stories that explain the beliefs, customs, and religious practices of a culture. They often involve gods or supernatural beings and are intended to provide an origin story for a culture or explain natural phenomena.
- **Legends**: Legends are stories that are told as if they were true, but their historical accuracy is often debatable. They may be based on real historical figures or events and are often used to teach moral lessons. Legends can also be defined as stories that are often based on real people or events but are exaggerated or distorted over time. Legends often help to explain cultural traditions or beliefs.
- **Folktales**: Folktales are stories that are passed down from generation to generation and typically involve ordinary people and animals. They often teach moral lessons, and many are cautionary tales that warn against certain behaviors.
- **Proverbs**: Proverbs are short, pithy sayings that express a simple but profound truth. They are often used to offer advice, teach moral lessons, and share cultural wisdom. Examples include "Actions speak louder than words" and "Where there's smoke, there's fire."
- **Riddles**: Riddles are short, clever puzzles that challenge the listener to solve a problem or find a hidden meaning. They are often used for entertainment or to teach critical thinking skills. Riddles can also be defined as puzzles or questions that require creative thinking to solve. Examples include "What is light as a feather but even the strongest man cannot hold it for more than a few minutes?"
- **Chants And Songs**: Chants and songs are musical forms of oral literature that use repetition and rhythm to create a memorable and powerful effect. They are often used for ritual purposes, as well as for entertainment and cultural expression.
- **Epics**: Epics are long, narrative poems that tell the story of a hero's journey or a nation's history. They are often used to reinforce cultural values and ideals and may feature supernatural beings or gods.
- **Ballads**: Ballads are short, narrative songs that tell a story in a simple and direct manner. They often feature tragic or heroic themes and are intended to be sung or accompanied by music.
- **Poetry**: Poetry is a form of literature that uses language to evoke emotional responses and create musical effects. It may be written or spoken, and it often incorporates a wide range of literary devices, such as metaphor, imagery, and symbolism.
- **Drama**: Drama is a form of oral literature that is performed for an audience. It typically involves actors playing out a scripted story in front of a live audience and often incorporates elements of music and dance.

- **Oratory**: The art of public speaking, which can include storytelling, speeches, and debates.
- **Parables**: Parables are stories that are used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson. For example, "The Prodigal Son" in the Bible is a parable about forgiveness and redemption.
- **Fairy Tales**: Fairy tales are a type of folktale that often involve magical creatures and elements. Examples include "Sleeping Beauty" and "Beauty and the Beast." Fairy tale can also be defined as a folktale featuring fairies or similar fantasy characters.
- **Folklores**: Folklores refer to the traditional beliefs, customs, stories, and practices of a culture or group of people. Examples include Native American folklore and African folklore. Folklores can also be defined as the tales, legends and superstitions of a particular ethnic population.
- **Tall Tales**: Tall tales are stories that are meant to be humorous and exaggerated. Examples include "Paul Bunyan" and "Pecos Bill." A tall tale is a type of folk story that exaggerates events and characters to an extreme degree for comedic or entertainment purposes. An example is the story of Paul Bunyan and his giant blue ox, Babe. A tall tale can also be defined as a greatly exaggerated, fantastic story.
- **Fables**: Fables are short stories that often feature animals as characters and have a clear moral lesson. A fable can also be defined as fictitious narrative intended to enforce some useful truth or precept, usually with animals, etc. as characters.
- **Apologue**: A short story with a moral, often involving talking animals or objects; a fable.
- **Idioms**: Idioms are expressions that have a figurative meaning different from their literal meaning. Examples include "The early bird catches the worm" and "Kick the bucket."
- **Sayings**: Sayings are short expressions or phrases that convey a widely accepted truth or wisdom. Examples include "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" and "You can't judge a book by its cover."
- **Tongue Twisters**: Tongue twisters are phrases that are difficult to say quickly or repeatedly due to their repetitive sounds or alliteration. Examples include "She sells seashells by the seashore" and "How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?"
- **Anecdotes**: Anecdotes are short, amusing or interesting stories about real events or people. Examples include stories about famous people or personal experiences shared among friends or family.
- **Trickster Narratives**: Trickster narratives are narratives that feature a character, usually an animal or supernatural being, who uses cunning and deception to play tricks on other characters. **Distinctive features**: trickster character uses wit and deception to outsmart others; trickster often breaks societal norms and expectations; usually includes a moral or lesson about human nature. Example: "Anansi the Spider."
- **Monster Narratives**: Monster narratives are narratives that feature monstrous beings or creatures as central characters or antagonists. **Distinctive features**: monsters are a key element of the story; often used to symbolize human fears or anxieties; can be used to highlight the struggle between good and evil.
- **Explanatory Narratives**: Explanatory narratives are narratives that aim to explain a natural phenomenon or event. **Distinctive features**: explains an event or phenomenon; often includes supernatural elements or divine intervention; helps to establish cultural beliefs or practices. Example: "The Book of Genesis" in the Bible.

Each genre or form of oral literature has its unique features, but they are all characterized by their oral transmission and focus on storytelling. They often serve important cultural, social, and educational functions within a community. These forms of oral literature have been passed down for centuries and are an important part of many cultures' traditions and belief systems.

WRITTEN LITERATURE

Written literature in Africa did not emerge in a vacuum. It is deeply interwoven with the rich tapestry of oral traditions. Modern African writers like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o consciously draw upon proverbs, myths, and narrative styles from their oral heritage, creating a unique literary voice that addresses both ancestral wisdom and contemporary realities. Written literature is primarily divided into three main genres: **Poetry, Prose (Novels & Short Stories), and Drama (Plays)**. Each has distinct features.

A. POETRY

Poetry is a genre of literature that uses aesthetic and rhythmic qualities of language—such as phonaesthetics, sound symbolism, and metre—to evoke meanings in addition to, or in place of, a prosaic ostensible meaning. The following are some of the features of poetry:

1. **Condensed Language (Economy of Words):** Poetry says much with little. Every word is loaded with meaning. Example: In his poem "Piano and Drums," Gabriel Okara uses contrasting imagery of the traditional drum and the Western piano to encapsulate the cultural confusion of the post-colonial African in a few potent stanzas.
2. **Musical/Rhythmic Quality:** Poetry often has an inherent beat or rhythm, achieved through meter, rhyme, and repetition. Example: The works of South African poet **Mongane Wally Serote** often employ a strong, insistent rhythm mimicking the heartbeat of township life and resistance, as in his poem "City Johannesburg."
3. **Imagery:** Poetry paints pictures using sensory language (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste). Example: **Christopher Okigbo's "Heavensgate"** is rich with intense, often mystical imagery: "The sun-ray swirled on the leaping wave… / The mortar is not yet dry."
4. **Figurative Language:** Heavy use of metaphors, similes, personification, and symbolism. Example: **Lenrie Peters'** poem "The Panic of Growing Older" uses the metaphor of a "fixed frontier" to symbolize the limitations and anxieties of aging.
5. **Structured Form:** Poems can have specific structures (stanzas, lines, sonnets, haikus) or be free verse. Example: **Kofi Awoonor's** poetry often adapts the structure and dirge-like repetition of Ewe traditional songs, as in "Songs of Sorrow."
6. **Emotional Intensity:** Poetry concentrates on evoking deep emotion. Example: **Syl Cheney-Coker's** poem "The Cancer of a Nobel Dream" expresses profound anguish and disillusionment with political betrayal in Sierra Leone.
7. **Theme-Centric:** Poems often explore a single, powerful idea or emotion in depth. Example: **Niyi Osundare's** poetry consistently centers on themes of social justice, human dignity, and the environment, as seen in "The Eye of the Earth."
8. **Persona/Speaker:** The voice in the poem may not be the poet's but a created character. Example: In **Wole Soyinka's** "Telephone Conversation," the speaker is a black man facing racial prejudice, a persona through which Soyinka explores the absurdity of racism.
9. **Diction (Word Choice):** Poets choose words for their sound, meaning, and connotation.
10. **Symbolism:** Objects or actions represent larger ideas. Example: The "python" in many African poems often symbolizes danger, ancestral power, or the colonial intruder. In **John Pepper Clark's** "The Casualties," the "river" symbolizes the relentless flow of fate and history.

B. THE NOVEL

A novel is an extended work of narrative fiction, usually written in prose and published as a book. It allows for deep exploration of character, society, and time. Features of a novel include:

1. **Length and Complexity:** Novels are long, allowing for multi-layered plots and subplots. Example: **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*** intricately weaves together the personal lives of its characters with the monumental historical event of the Nigerian Civil War.

2. **Narrative Structure:** This includes linear, non-linear (flashbacks), epistolary (letters), or stream-of-consciousness. Example: **Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor's *Dust*** uses a fragmented, non-linear structure to mirror the traumatic memory of post-election violence in Kenya.
3. **Character Development (Round Characters):** Novels feature characters who grow, change, and have psychological depth. Example: **Okonkwo in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*** is a profoundly tragic, round character whose strengths and fatal flaws are meticulously developed.
4. **Plot:** A complex sequence of events with exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Example: **Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*** plots Tambu's journey from a rural homestead to a missionary school, charting her awakening against colonialism and patriarchy.
5. **Setting (Temporal and Spatial):** Detailed depiction of time and place, often crucial to theme. Example: **Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood*** meticulously sets its story in post-independence Ilmorog, Kenya, making the landscape a character that reflects societal decay and hope.
6. **Themes:** Novels explore profound and multiple themes. Example: **Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born*** tackles themes of moral decay, disillusionment after independence, and the clash between integrity and corruption.
7. **Point of View:** First-person, third-person limited, or omniscient. Example: **Marlon James's *A Brief History of Seven Killings*** uses a kaleidoscopic first-person narrative from multiple characters (gunmen, journalists, ghosts) to tell the story of attempted assassination of Bob Marley.
8. **Social Scope:** Novels often portray a wide cross-section of society. Example: **Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*** presents the full fabric of Igbo pre-colonial society—its leaders, outcasts, priests, farmers, and women.
9. **Realism/Verisimilitude:** Creating a believable world, even in fantasy. Example: **Ben Okri's *The Famished Road***, while steeped in the magical realism of the spirit-child (*abiku*), grounds its story in the vivid, harsh realities of a Nigerian ghetto.
10. **Authorial Commentary:** The narrator may directly or indirectly offer social or philosophical commentary. Example: Throughout **Nadine Gordimer's *Burger's Daughter***, the narrative probes the complexities of political commitment, identity, and morality in apartheid South Africa.

C. DRAMA / PLAY

Drama is literature intended for performance before an audience. It consists of dialogue and stage directions. Distinctive features of drama include:

1. **Dialogue:** The story is conveyed primarily through conversation between characters. Example: The sharp, confrontational dialogue in **Athol Fugard's *"Master Harold"… and the boys*** reveals the deep wounds of apartheid in a simple tea-room setting.
2. **Stage Directions:** Instructions for performance (setting, movement, tone, expression). Example: **Wole Soyinka's** directions in *The Lion and the Jewel* are elaborate, prescribing dance, mime, and specific gestures integral to the storytelling.
3. **Acts and Scenes:** The structural division of the play. Example: **J.P. Clark-Bekederemo's *The Raft*** is a continuous, tense one-act play, mirroring the trapped, unending predicament of its four lumbermen on the Niger River.
4. **Dramatic Conflict:** The engine of a play; can be internal, interpersonal, or with society. Example: **Leopold Senghor's *Chaka*** centers on the internal conflict of the Zulu king, torn between his mystical destiny and his humane conscience.
5. **Characters as Types:** Often includes archetypes (hero, villain, fool) or representations of social forces. Example: **Zakes Mda's *The Mother of All Eating*** uses the central character, a corrupt government official, as a type representing the greed of the post-colonial elite.
6. **Visual and Aural Spectacle:** Relies on sets, costumes, lighting, sound, and music. Example: **Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*** demands elaborate Yoruba ritual

costumes, drumming, and the evocative *egungun* masquerade, making spectacle central to its meaning.

7. **Irony (Dramatic & Situational):** The audience knows something characters do not, or situations reverse expectations. Example: In **Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*** (adapted for stage), the situational irony is crushing: Nnu Ego achieves the societal ideal of many children but finds only misery and neglect.
8. **Catharsis:** The emotional release experienced by the audience. Example: The tragic culmination of **Soyinka's *The Strong Breed***, where Eman sacrifices himself, aims to purge the audience of pity and fear regarding communal scapegoating.
9. **Symbolic Action:** Physical actions on stage carry metaphorical weight. Example: The constant mending of sacks in **Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Banzi Is Dead*** symbolizes the fragile, patched-together identities Black South Africans were forced to assume under pass laws.
10. **Direct Audience Engagement:** Soliloquies, asides, or breaking the fourth wall. Example: **Femi Osofisan's** plays often use metatheatre—actors stepping out of role to address the audience—to provoke critical thought about history and social change, as seen in *Once Upon Four Robbers*.

D. SHORT STORY

A short story is a brief work of fiction, focusing on a single incident or character, aiming for unity of effect. Short stories are characterized by:

1. **Brevity:** Can be read in one sitting. Example: **Ama Ata Aidoo's "The Girl Who Can"** is a concise, powerful narrative about a young girl challenging village prejudice about women.
2. **Single Incident or Effect:** Focuses on one central event, mood, or revelation. Example: **Chinua Achebe's "Civil Peace"** centers on the single incident of Jonathan Iwegbu being robbed after the Nigerian Civil War, highlighting his resilience.
3. **Limited Characters:** Usually features few characters, with one central protagonist. Example: **Bessie Head's "The Collector of Treasures"** focuses deeply on the life and crime of one woman, Dikeledi, exploring the pressures that led to her act.
4. **Economy of Setting:** Settings are sketched efficiently. Example: **Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's "The Upright Revolution"** uses a simple, allegorical setting to explore deep questions about cooperation and the purpose of human limbs.
5. **Quick Opening:** The story begins *in medias res* (in the middle of things). Example: **Alex La Guma's "A Matter of Taste"** opens immediately with two train passengers in apartheid South Africa, establishing tension from the first line.
6. **Twist Ending or Epiphany:** Often ends with a surprising turn or a moment of profound realization. Example: **Charles Mungoshi's "The Setting Sun and the Rolling World"** ends with the heartbreaking epiphany of a father realizing he cannot save his son from a dangerous future.
7. **Intense Focus:** Every detail contributes to the main theme or effect. Example: In **Nadine Gordimer's "Once Upon a Time,"** every detail of the fortified suburban home builds relentlessly towards its devastating, ironic conclusion.
8. **Reliance on Suggestion:** Implies more than it states. Example: **Dambudzo Marechera's "House of Hunger"** (the short story) uses fragmented, suggestive prose to convey the psychological disintegration of its narrator.
9. **One Major Conflict:** The narrative revolves around resolving one primary tension. Example: **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "The Thing Around Your Neck"** focuses on the central conflict of a Nigerian immigrant woman grappling with loneliness and alienation in America.
10. **Concentrated Theme:** Explores a single theme with precision. Example: **Megan Voysey-Braig's "Tjatji"** (in *Water: New Short Fiction from Africa*) focuses intensely on the theme of water scarcity and its human cost in a Cape Town township.

FUNCTIONS OF WRITTEN LITERATURE

- **Creativity**: Written literature allows writers to express their creativity and imagination, often resulting in works of art that provide entertainment, comfort, or emotional fulfillment for readers.
- **Communication**: Written literature enables writers to communicate complex ideas, information, and emotions to readers in a carefully crafted manner, often resulting in a depth of understanding that cannot be achieved through other forms of communication.
- **Exploration and discovery**: Written literature opens up possibilities for exploration and discovery, as writers can delve into new ideas, worlds, and perspectives that allow readers to gain greater insight into the human condition.
- **Commentary and critique**: Written literature can be used as a means of social, political, and cultural commentary, offering critiques and observations on society, individuals, and institutions.
- **Education**: Written literature can also be used as a tool for education, allowing readers to learn about new cultures, ideas, and concepts in a captivating and engaging manner.
- **Preservation**: Written literature is often used as a means of preserving cultural and historical information, as well as the works of previous generations, in a durable and long-lasting form.

FUNCTIONS OF ORAL LITERATURE

- **Preserving history and cultural heritage**: Oral literature is often used to pass down historical events, traditional beliefs, customs, and other aspects of a culture's heritage from one generation to the next.
- **Entertainment**: Oral literature can entertain and provide a shared cultural experience, particularly during communal gatherings or festivals.
- **Education and moral instruction**: Many oral stories and fables serve as lessons, teaching listeners about proper behavior, ethical values, and social norms in their culture.
- **Social cohesion**: Oral literature can help to build a sense of community and shared identity, particularly when performed in group settings.
- **Spiritual and religious purposes**: Oral literature can also be used as a means of expressing spiritual beliefs and practices, as well as for communicating with the divine.
- **Resistance and subversion**: In some cases, oral literature can be used as a form of protest or rebellion against dominant cultural norms and values, particularly in situations where the transmission of such narratives is censored or prohibited.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORAL AND WRITTEN LITERATURE

Oral and written literature are not opposing forces but interrelated strands in the tapestry of human expression, especially in Africa. Their relationship is dynamic and symbiotic.

1. **Genetic/Historical Relationship:** Written literature historically evolves from oral traditions. The earliest written forms—epics like *Sundiata*—were recordings of oral narratives. African written literature is deeply rooted in its oral heritage.
2. **Source of Inspiration & Material:** Modern African writers consciously draw themes, plots, character types (the trickster), proverbs, and rhythmic patterns from oral literature. Example: **Wole Soyinka** infuses his plays (*The Lion and the Jewel*, *Death and the King's Horseman*) with Yoruba myths, deities (Ogun, Sango), and the performative aesthetics of the marketplace and festival.
3. **Stylistic Influence:** The call-and-response pattern, repetition for emphasis, digressive storytelling, and use of ideophones (sound-describing words like *gbagbadugbadu* for chaos) in oral performance directly influence the style of many African novelists and poets.
4. **A Shared Communal Function:** Both forms, at their core, serve to educate, entertain, critique society, and preserve a people's worldview. The difference is often in the medium and scale of the "community."

5. **Continuous Co-existence:** In many African societies, oral literature does not die with the advent of writing; it thrives alongside it. A griot's performance and a published novel exist simultaneously, serving different but complementary audiences and occasions.
6. **Intertextual Dialogue:** Written literature often enters into a dialogue with oral tradition, sometimes to affirm it, sometimes to critique or reinterpret it.
    - **Example: Bessie Head** in *Maru* and **Ama Ata Aidoo** in her plays reinterpret traditional gender roles found in oral tales, offering feminist re-readings.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ORAL AND WRITTEN LITERATURE

ASPECT	ORAL LITERATURE	WRITTEN LITERATURE
Medium/Transmission	Transmitted through sound (spoken word, song, chant) and performance. Ephemeral in the moment.	Transmitted through visible, fixed marks (writing/print/digital). Permanent in form.
Mode of Preservation	Preserved in human memory. Relies on the skill and recall of performers (griots, storytellers).	Preserved in physical or digital objects (books, scrolls, files). Independent of any one person's memory.
Authorship	**Communal/Anonymous.** Evolves over time through many contributors. The performer is a re-creator.	**Individual/Copyrighted.** Usually attributed to a specific author or known playwright.
Stability of Text	**Fluid/Variable.** The "text" changes with each performance, audience, and performer's mood. Multiple versions coexist.	**Fixed/Stable.** The text remains identical in every copy of a given edition. Authority rests with the fixed version.
Primary Sensory Channel	**Aural & Visual.** Engages the ear (language, music, rhythm) and the eye (gesture, costume, dance, setting).	**Visual (for prose).** Primarily engages the eye through reading. Inner hearing is imagined.
Role of Audience	**Active & Participatory.** Audience can interrupt, respond, sing along, and influence the performance in real-time.	**Passive & Private.** Engagement is solitary and silent (typically). The reader interacts mentally but not physically.
Context & Setting	**Context-Dependent.** Integral to a specific social event (funeral, wedding, festival, initiation). Cannot be divorced from its performance context.	**Context-Independent.** Can be consumed anywhere, anytime. The reading context does not alter the fixed text.
Use of Paralinguistic Features	**Heavy Reliance.** Uses tone, pitch, volume, facial expressions, gestures, body movement, music, and props.	**Absent (in text).** Relies solely on words and punctuation. Stage directions in drama are instructions for *potential* performance.
Immediate Social Feedback	**Direct.** The performer receives immediate applause, laughter, silence, or criticism and can adapt.	**Delayed.** Feedback comes later through reviews, sales, or academic criticism, not during creation/reading.
Learning & Composition Process	Learned through **apprenticeship, imitation, and practice** within a community. Composed in performance.	Learned through **formal study of grammar, literary models, and writing techniques**. Composed in drafts, revised privately.

FEATURES OF LANGUAGE USED IN LITERATURE

Literary language is not a different language, but an artistic *use* of language. It is characterized by deliberate stylistic choices that foreground expression, evoke emotion, and create layers of meaning beyond mere communication.

1. **Figurative Language (Metaphor & Simile):** This is the cornerstone of literary expression, describing one thing in terms of another to create vivid imagery and abstract connections. Example: In **Okot p'Bitek's *Song of Lawino***, he writes, "The pampered housegirl / With breasts like drinking gourds," using a simile rooted in Acholi culture to convey both physicality and function.
2. **Symbolism:** Objects, characters, or actions are used to represent larger ideas or concepts. Example: The **"river"** in African literature often symbolizes life, time, or a spiritual boundary. In **Ben Okri's *The Famished Road***, the road itself is a profound symbol of destiny, struggle, and the intersection of the spiritual and physical worlds.
3. **Connotative Diction:** Words are chosen for their implied emotional or cultural associations (connotations) rather than just their literal meanings (denotations). Example: Describing a character's walk as a "trudge" versus a "stride" conveys fatigue versus confidence, shaping reader perception without explicit statement.
4. **Rhythm and Musicality:** Even in prose, language is orchestrated for rhythmic flow through sentence length, punctuation, and syllabic patterns. Example: **Chinua Achebe** uses the rhythmic cadence of Igbo speech and proverbs: "The sun shines and shines, but it shines through a *bloody haze*." The repetition of "shines" and the alliteration in "bloody haze" create a musical, ominous tone.
5. **Imagery:** Language that appeals to the senses (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste) to paint mental pictures. Example: **Mia Couto's** writing in *Sleepwalking Land* is saturated with sensory imagery: "The sea wasn't blue, it was the colour of a *bruised eyelid*," creating a uniquely Mozambican poetic realism.
6. **Defamiliarization:** Making the familiar strange by describing it in an unconventional way, forcing the reader to see it anew. Example: **Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor** in *Dust* describes a character's grief as "a *stone-egg* in her throat," a startling image that defamiliarizes emotional pain into a tangible, suffocating object.
7. **Dialect and Idiolect:** Use of regional speech patterns or an individual character's unique verbal habits to establish authenticity and personality. Example: **Tsitsi Dangarembga** in *Nervous Conditions* uses Shona syntactic structures and translated idioms within English ("You will cook my intestines!"), creating a distinct linguistic texture that reflects the characters' worldview.
8. **Ambiguity and Multivalence:** Literary language often embraces multiple, simultaneous meanings, inviting interpretation and depth. Example: The title **"Petals of Blood"** by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o is highly ambiguous—it could symbolize exploited workers, violent revolution, lost innocence, or sacrificial love, all of which resonate in the novel.
9. **Hyperbole and Understatement:** Exaggeration for effect, or deliberate downplaying to create irony or emphasis. Example: In oral praise poetry (*izibongo*), a Zulu king might be called "a *swallower of mountains*," using hyperbole to convey immense power. Understatement is used for bitter irony in post-war writing.
10. **Intertextuality and Allusion:** Referencing other literary works, myths, or historical texts to enrich meaning. Example: **Wole Soyinka's *The Bacchae of Euripides: A Communion Rite*** directly alludes to the Greek tragedy, using it as a framework to critique the Nigerian military dictatorship, creating a dense dialogue between ancient European and modern African contexts.

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE AS THE TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

Language and literature are often considered to be the two sides of the same coin because of their strong interrelationships. Literature is a work of art using imaginative language to present social realities; on the other hand, language is a system of communication used by human beings to convey messages. Language cannot be separated from literature because:

- Language is the medium of literature: Literature relies on language to convey meaning, evoke emotions, and create art. Without language, there can be no literature.
- Literature is a product of language: Literature is created using language, whether it's written, spoken, or signed. Language provides the tools for writers to express themselves and create their works. An artistic use of language is what makes literature.
- Literature reflects language and culture: Literature reflects the language and culture of the society in which it is produced. It captures the norms, values, and beliefs of the people who speak that language, making it a reflection of their world.
- Literature shapes language and culture: Literature can also shape and influence language and culture. Great works of literature have the power to introduce new ideas, concepts, and expressions into a language, which can then become part of the culture.
- Language and literature are inseparable: Language and literature are so closely related that they cannot be separated. Literature uses language to express its ideas, and language is strengthened and enriched by literature. Literature acts as a content or material to be communicated through language.
- Literature aims at preserving itself for the future through language. Literature expresses its beauty by the use of figurative language and rhetorical devices.
- Language determines characters in literature. One among the ways of determining characters is what they say, their use of language. If a character speaks a non-standard or ungrammatical language, he or she is considered to be uneducated.
- Literature transforms and intensifies ordinary language into creative one. A systematic deviation from everyday speech to figurative language. Language is one among the elements of literature with reference to diction or language use.

Language and literature are interconnected because they rely on each other for their existence and development. Language is the medium of literature, while literature reflects and shapes language and culture. Together, they form a vital part of human expression and communication.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Their relationship is symbiotic and foundational; one cannot exist without the other in its realized form.

1. **Language as the Medium:** Language is the fundamental material of literature, just as marble is to sculpture or sound to music. Literature is *crafted language*.
2. **Language as the Tool:** The writer uses vocabulary, grammar, and syntax as tools to build characters, plots, settings, and themes.
3. **Literature as a Laboratory for Language:** Literature pushes linguistic boundaries, experiments with new forms, and expands the possibilities of what a language can express.
4. **Literature Preserves Linguistic States:** Texts capture the idiom, slang, and formal usage of their time, serving as historical records of a language's evolution (e.g., Shakespearean English vs. Achebe's post-colonial English).
5. **Mutual Enrichment:** Great literature enriches the language itself, introducing new phrases, metaphors, and allusions into common parlance. Example: Achebe's proverbs have entered global literary discourse.

6. **Ideological Battlefield:** Language in literature is a site of power struggle. The choice to write in a colonial language vs. an indigenous one is a deeply political literary act, as argued by **Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o** in *Decolonising the Mind*.
7. **Cultural Specificity:** Literature encodes a culture's unique worldview in the specific nuances, proverbs, and rhythms of its language. Translating literature always involves some degree of cultural translation.
8. **Aesthetic Dependence:** The beauty and power of a literary work are intrinsically tied to the aesthetic qualities (sound, rhythm, wordplay) of the language in which it is composed.
9. **Reader's Linguistic Competence:** A reader's depth of understanding is contingent on their mastery of the language's literary codes, allusions, and registers.
10. **Literature as Language Art:** This relationship is best summarized by stating that literature is the *art form of which language is both the substance and the method*.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ORDINARY AND LITERARY LANGUAGE

ASPECT	ORDINARY/PRACTICAL LANGUAGE	LITERARY LANGUAGE
Primary Function	**Communication & Transaction.** To inform, request, command, or socialize (e.g., "Pass the salt.").	**Aesthetic & Expressive.** To create an artistic experience, evoke emotion, and provoke thought.
Focus	**On the Message/Referent.** Language is a transparent vehicle pointing to an external reality or need.	**On the Message & the Medium.** The *form* of the language (how it is said) is as important as the *content* (what is said).
Originality	**Often Formulaic & Predictable.** Uses clichés, stock phrases, and standard greetings for efficiency.	**Values Novelty & Defamiliarization.** Seeks fresh, original expressions to make the reader perceive the world anew.
Ambiguity	**Seeks to Minimize Ambiguity.** Aims for clarity and single, unambiguous meaning to prevent misunderstanding.	**Often Embraces Ambiguity & Multivalence.** Open to multiple interpretations, enriching the text's depth.
Structure	**Governed by Standard Syntax & Grammar.** Follows conventional rules for clear communication.	**May Deliberately Break Rules.** Uses fragments, unusual syntax, or poetic license for rhythmic or emphatic effect (e.g., stream of consciousness).
Density	**Low Semantic Density.** Words generally carry their standard, dictionary meanings.	**High Semantic Density.** Words are loaded with connotation, symbol, and layered meaning.
Memorability	**Designed for Instant Comprehension, not Recall.** Sentences are functional and often forgotten.	**Crafted for Resonance & Recall.** Uses rhythm, repetition, and striking imagery to lodge in the memory.
Context Dependence	**Highly Context-Dependent.** Meaning relies heavily on the immediate situation (pragmatics).	**Creates Its Own Internal Context.** The text builds a self-contained world that governs meaning.
Economy	**Can be Redundant or Verbose.** Everyday chat includes filler words and repetitions.	**Strives for Economy & Precision.** In poetry especially, every word is chosen with maximum load-bearing intent.
Relationship with Reader/Listener	**Assumes Cooperative Interaction.** Part of a dialogue with immediate feedback.	**Implies a Contemplative Receiver.** The "reader" is in a state of reflection, often in isolation, engaging with a finished artifact.

FACTORS FOR USING FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN AFRICAN LITERATURE

The choice of language for African writers is complex, fraught with historical, political, and practical considerations.

1. **Legacy of Colonial Language Policies:** Colonial education systems exclusively promoted European languages (English, French, Portuguese) as languages of intellect and administration, marginalizing indigenous tongues. The first generation of African writers was educated in and thus literate primarily in these languages.
2. **The Quest for a "National" & Pan-African Audience:** In linguistically diverse nations (e.g., Nigeria with 500+ languages), a European language acts as a *lingua franca*, allowing the writer to reach a national and continental audience, fostering unity.
3. **Access to the Global Market & Publishing Infrastructure:** Major publishing houses and the international literary market (prizes, reviews, sales) are centered in Europe and North America. Writing in English or French guarantees vastly wider publication opportunities and economic viability.
4. **Educational System Dependency:** School and university curricula in Africa are often still structured around colonial languages. A novel in English is more likely to be taught, creating a stable readership and canonization.
5. **Linguistic Hegemony & Prestige:** Colonial languages retain an aura of modernity, sophistication, and global connectivity, often perceived as more "prestigious" for literary expression by certain elites.
6. **Multilingual Realities & Code-Switching:** Many African writers reflect their societies' multilingualism by blending the foreign language with indigenous words, phrases, and proverbs (e.g., **Chinua Achebe's "African English"**). The foreign language becomes a base for linguistic fusion.
7. **Cost and Practicality of Indigenous Language Publishing:** Publishing in indigenous languages often faces smaller print runs, limited distribution networks, lack of skilled editors in those languages, and higher relative costs, making it less attractive commercially.
8. **The "Writer's Toolkit" Argument:** Some argue that the colonial language, having been used to impose oppression, can be captured, subverted, and "made to bear the burden of [the writer's] experience" (**Achebe**), turning the tool of oppression into a tool of liberation.
9. **Audience for Diaspora & Exile:** Writers in exile or targeting the African diaspora find a European language essential to connect with scattered communities who may share a colonial language but not a specific indigenous one.
10. **Critique and Irony:** Using the colonizer's language can itself be an ironic act, a way to master and critique the colonial worldview from within its own linguistic framework, as seen in the works of **J.M. Coetzee** or **Ayi Kwei Armah**.

IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE IN LITERATURE

1. **Constitutive Importance:** Language is the *sine qua non* of literature; without it, literature does not exist in any communicable form.
2. **Determiner of Artistic Quality:** The skill of a writer is judged primarily by their mastery and innovative use of language.
3. **Vehicle for Cultural Transmission:** It carries the specific idioms, humor, wisdom, and worldview of a culture, making literature a primary vehicle for cultural preservation and transmission.
4. **Shapes Reader Perception:** The language used directly controls how a reader perceives characters, settings, and events (e.g., sympathetic vs. satirical diction).
5. **Creates Atmosphere and Tone:** Language establishes the mood—whether a scene is tense, joyful, tragic, or ironic—through word choice and sentence rhythm.
6. **Instrument of Characterization:** A character's social class, education, origin, and personality are revealed through their idiolect and dialogue.

7. **Medium for Thematic Depth:** Complex themes are explored not just through plot, but through the linguistic patterns, metaphors, and symbols woven into the text's fabric.
8. **Facilitates Emotional Engagement:** Poetic and resonant language connects with the reader on an emotional level more powerfully than plain statement.
9. **Site of Identity and Resistance:** For marginalized communities, using their own dialect or reclaiming a colonial language is an act of asserting identity and political resistance.
10. **Defines Literary Movements:** Shifts in literary history (from Classicism to Romanticism to Modernism) are marked by profound shifts in literary language—from formal to expressive, from objective to stream-of-consciousness.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF LITERARY VS. ORDINARY LANGUAGE

1. **Obscurity and Indeterminacy:** Literary language often embraces unclear or multiple meanings, inviting interpretation. Ordinary language seeks clarity. **Example:** The ending of **M.G. Vassanji's *The Gunny Sack*** leaves certain fates ambiguous, reflecting the indeterminacy of memory and diaspora.
2. **Terseness and Economy:** Especially in poetry, language is compressed to carry maximum meaning with minimum words. **Example:** The stark, powerful lines of **Kofi Awoonor's poetry**.
3. **Rhythm and Meter:** Literary language consciously arranges stressed and unstressed syllables to create a musical pattern (meter) or a general cadence (rhythm). **Example:** The rhythmic incantation of **Christopher Okigbo's *Heavensgate***.
4. **Ambiguity and Multivalence:** Words/phrases carry several plausible meanings simultaneously. **Example:** The **"beautyful ones"** in Armah's title are ironically both the corrupt elite and the unborn, hopeful future.
5. **Deviant Nature (Poetic License):** It may intentionally break standard rules of grammar, syntax, or word order for effect. **Example: Gabriel Okara's *The Voice*** uses syntactic structures directly translated from Ijaw, creating a deliberately "deviant" English to convey an African consciousness.
6. **Creativity and Novelty:** It seeks fresh, original expressions to avoid cliché. **Example: Ben Okri describing a character's smile as "a crack in the mask of his face."**
7. **Archaism:** The deliberate use of old-fashioned or obsolete words to evoke a particular period or solemnity. **Example:** The use of terms such as **thy**, **thine**, **thou**, **thee**, and proverbs, which are linguistic artefacts of ancestral wisdom, functions as a form of archaism in African novels.
8. **Figurative Nature:** It relies heavily on metaphor, simile, and symbol rather than literal statement. **Example:** Describing a community's resilience as "a baobab tree in the drought" instead of "they are very strong."
9. **Aesthetic Function (Foregrounding):** The form of the language is "foregrounded" or made prominent for its own sake, to be admired as an artistic object. **Example:** The intricate wordplay and sound patterning in **Niyi Osundare's poetry**, where the sound is part of the meaning.
10. **Complexity and Density:** Literary language packs layers of connotation, allusion, and symbolism into a compact space, demanding and rewarding re-reading. **Example:** A single chapter in **Wole Soyinka's *The Interpreters*** contains social satire, metaphysical debate, and mythological allusion, requiring active, complex decoding.

LITERARY DEVICES

Literary devices are techniques that writers use to express their ideas and enhance their writing. There are two major kinds of literary devices which act as two major aspects of literary works namely literary elements (plot, setting, narrative structure ‘style’, characters, mood, tone, conflict, theme, moral and point of view) and literary techniques (figurative language such as metaphor, simile, alliteration, hyperbole, euphemism, personification, paradox etc.). Literary elements have an inherent existence in literary piece and are extensively employed by writers to develop a literary piece. Writers simply cannot create their desired work without including literary elements in a thoroughly professional manner.

Literary techniques on the contrary are structures usually a word, words or phrases in literary texts that writers employ to achieve not merely artistic ends but also to help readers achieve a greater understanding and appreciation of their literary works. Some literary devices double as rhetorical devices which are used to convey meaning or persuade readers on a certain point. Basically, literary devices are artistic; rhetorical devices are informative and persuasive.

Figures of Speech

Figures of speech are a type of literary device used in literature that depart from the literal meaning of words to create new and imaginative expressions. The functions of figures of speech in literature include the following:

- Adding depth and richness: Figures of speech allow writers to create more complex and nuanced descriptions of people, places, and ideas. By using figurative language, writers can evoke emotions, create vivid imagery, and add depth and richness to their writing.
- Creating impact and emphasis: Figures of speech can be used to create emphasis, draw attention to certain aspects of a text, and make a piece of writing more memorable. They can be used to highlight important ideas or to add drama and tension to a scene.
- Creating humor and irony: Figures of speech can also be used to create humor and irony in literature. By using unexpected or exaggerated comparisons or expressions, they can create amusement or add a wry or cynical tone to a text.
- Aiding memorization: Figures of speech can also make a piece of writing more memorable by creating memorable and distinctive expressions that are more easily remembered than simple descriptions.
- Enhancing the aesthetic qualities of writing: Figures of speech can also enhance the aesthetic qualities of writing by adding beauty and elegance to language. In poetry, they can create musicality and rhythm that enhances the overall impact and meaning of a poem.

General Functions of Literary Devices

a) They highlight important concepts in a text.
b) They strengthen the narrative.
c) They help readers connect to the characters and themes.
d) They are used for emphasis and clarity.
e) They are used to make the story much more interesting for the reader.
f) They help the writer to tell a story and create a world that the reader can accept as real or plausible.
g) They help readers to appreciate, interpret and analyze a literary work.
h) They allow readers to compare a work of one writer to that of the other to determine its worth.
i) They beautify the piece of literature.
j) They give deeper meanings to literature.
k) They are useful in testing the very understanding of the readers.
l) They provide to the readers the enjoyment of reading literary works.
m) They help motivating readers' imagination to visualize the characters and scenes more clearly.
n) They create a special and pointed effect in the writing to convey information or to help readers understand the writing on a deeper level.
o) They are narrative techniques that add texture, energy, and excitement to the narrative, grip the reader's imagination, and convey information.

A SENTENTIAL ADVERB

This is a single word or short phrase, usually interrupting normal syntax, used to lend emphasis to the words immediately proximate to the adverb. (We emphasize the words on each side of a pause or interruption in order to maintain continuity of the thought.) Compare:

- But the lake was not drained before April.

- But the lake was not, in fact, drained before April.

Sentential adverbs are most frequently placed near the beginning of a sentence, where important material has been placed:

- All truth is not, indeed, of equal importance; but if little violations are allowed, every violation will in time be thought little.

But sometimes they are placed at the very beginning of a sentence, thereby serving as signals that the whole sentence is especially important. In such cases the sentence should be kept as short as possible:

- In short, the cobbler had neglected his soul.
- Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

Or the author may show that he does not intend to underemphasize an objection or argument he rejects:

- To be sure, no one desires to live in a foul and disgusting environment. But neither do we want to desert our cities.

In a few instances, especially with short sentences, the sentential adverb can be placed last:

- It was a hot day indeed.
- Baraka won, of course.

A common practice is setting off the sentential adverb by commas, which increases the emphasis on the surrounding words, though in many cases the commas are necessary for clarity as well and cannot be omitted. Note how the adverb itself is also emphasized:

- He without doubt can be trusted with a cookie.
- He, without doubt, can be trusted with a cookie.

A sentential adverb can emphasize a phrase:

- The Obamas, clearly a happy family, live in an old house with squeaky floors.

Transitional phrases, accostives, some adverbs, and other interrupters can be used for emphasizing portions of sentences, and therefore function as kinds of quasi-sentential adverbs in those circumstances.

- We find a few people, however, unwilling to come.
- "Your last remark," he said, "is impertinent."
- There is nothing, Sir, too little for so little a creature as man.

Some useful sentential adverbs include the following: in fact, of course, indeed, I think, without doubt, to be sure, naturally, it seems, after all, for all that, in brief, on the whole, in short, to tell the truth, in any event, clearly, I suppose, I hope, at least, assuredly, certainly, remarkably, importantly, definitely. In formal writing, avoid these and similar colloquial emphases: you know, you see, huh, get this. And it goes without saying that you should avoid the unprintable expletives.

ASYNDETON

This consists of omitting conjunctions between words, phrases, or clauses. In a list of items, asyndeton gives the effect of unpremeditated multiplicity, of an extemporaneous rather than a labored account:

- On his return he received medals, honors, treasures, titles, fame.

The lack of the "and" conjunction gives the impression that the list is perhaps not complete. Compare:

- She likes oranges, guavas, mangoes, apples, avocados.
- She likes oranges, guavas, mangoes, apples, and avocados.

Sometimes an asyndetic list is useful for the strong and direct climactic effect it has, much more emphatic than if a final conjunction were used. Compare:

- They spent the day wondering, searching, thinking, understanding.
- They spent the day wondering, searching, thinking, and understanding.

In certain cases, the omission of a conjunction between short phrases gives the impression of synonymity to the phrases, or makes the latter phrase appear to be an afterthought or even a substitute for the former. Compare:

- He was a winner, a hero.
- He was a winner and a hero.

Notice also the degree of spontaneity granted in some cases by asyndetic usage. "The moist, rich, fertile soil," appears more natural and spontaneous than "the moist, rich, and fertile soil."

Generally, asyndeton offers the feeling of speed and concision to lists and phrases and clauses, but occasionally the effect cannot be so easily categorized. Consider the "flavor" of these examples:

- If, as is the case, we feel responsibility, are ashamed, are frightened, at transgressing the voice of conscience, this implies that there is One to whom we are responsible, before whom we are ashamed, whose claims upon us we fear.
- In books I find the dead as if they were alive; in books I foresee things to come; in books warlike affairs are set forth; from books come forth the laws of peace.

POLYSYNDETON

This is the use of a conjunction between each word, phrase, or clause, and is thus structurally the opposite of asyndeton. The rhetorical effect of polysyndeton, however, often shares with that of asyndeton a feeling of multiplicity, energetic enumeration, and building up.

- They read and studied and wrote and drilled. I laughed and played and talked and flunked.

Use polysyndeton to show an attempt to encompass something complex:

- The water, like a witch's oils, burnt green, and blue, and white.
- [He] pursues his way, and swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.

The multiple conjunctions of the polysyndetic structure call attention to themselves and therefore add the effect of persistence or intensity or emphasis to the other effect of multiplicity. The repeated use of "nor" or "or" emphasizes alternatives; repeated use of "but" or "yet" stresses qualifications. Consider the effectiveness of these:

- And to set forth the right standard, and to train according to it, and to help forward all students towards it according to their various capacities, this I conceive to be the business of a university.
- We have not power, nor influence, nor money, nor authority; but a willingness to persevere, and the hope that we shall conquer soon.

In a skilled hand, a shift from polysyndeton to asyndeton can be very impressive:

- Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.

UNDERSTATEMENT

This deliberately expresses an idea as less important than it actually is, either for ironic emphasis or for politeness and tact. When the writer's audience can be expected to know the true nature of a fact which might be rather difficult to describe adequately in a brief space, the writer may choose to understate the fact as a means of employing the reader's own powers of description. For example, instead of endeavoring to describe in a few words the horrors and destruction of the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco, a writer might state:

- The 1906 San Francisco earthquake interrupted business somewhat in the downtown area.

The effect is not the same as a description of destruction, since understatement like this necessarily smacks of flippancy to some degree; but occasionally that is a desirable effect. Consider these usages:

- Baraka and Rachel were married, the bells rang, and everybody smiled.
- To begin perfect happiness at the respective ages of twenty-six and eighteen is to do pretty well.
- Last week I saw a woman flayed, and you will hardly believe how much it altered her person for the worse.
- You know I would be a little disappointed if you were to be hit by a drunk driver at two a.m., so I hope you will be home early.

In these cases, the reader supplies his own knowledge of the facts and fills out a more vivid and personal description than the writer might have. In a more important way, understatement should be used as a tool for modesty and tactfulness. Whenever you represent your own accomplishments, and often when you just describe your own position, an understatement of the facts will help you to avoid the charge of egotism on the one hand and of self-interested puffery on the other.

We are always more pleased to discover a thing greater than promised rather than less than promised--or, "It is more pleasing to see smoke brightening into flame, than flame sinking into smoke." And it goes without saying that a person modest of his own talents wins our admiration more easily than an egotist. Thus, an expert geologist might say, "Yes, I know a little about rocks," rather than, "Yes, I'm an expert about rocks." (And even bigger expert might raise his eyebrows if he heard that.)

Understatement is especially useful in dealing with a hostile audience or in disagreeing with someone, because the statement, while carrying the same point, is much less offensive. Compare:

- The second law of thermodynamics pretty much works against the possibility of such an event.
- The second law of thermodynamics proves conclusively that that theory is utterly false and ridiculous.

Remember, the goal of writing is to persuade, not to offend; once you insult or put off your opponent, objector, or disbeliever, you will never persuade him of anything, no matter how "obviously wrong" he is or how clearly right you are. The degree and power of pride in the human heart must never be underestimated.

Many people are unwilling to hear objections of any kind, and view disagreement as a sign of contempt for their intellect. The use of understatement allows you to show a kind of respect for your reader's understanding. You have to object to his belief, but you are sympathetic with his position and see how he might have come to believe it; therefore, you humbly offer to steer him right, or at least to offer what you think is a more accurate view. Even those who agree with you already will be more persuaded because the modest thinker is always preferable to the flaming bigot. Compare these statements and consider what effect each would have on you if you read them in a persuasive article:

- Anyone who says this water is safe to drink is either stupid or foolish. The stuff is poisoned with coliform bacteria. Don't those idiots know that?
- My opponents think this water is drinkable, but I'm not sure I would drink it. Perhaps they are not aware of the dangerous bacterial count . . . [and so on, explaining the basis for your opinion].

LITOTES

A particular form of understatement, is generated by denying the opposite or contrary of the word which otherwise would be used. Depending on the tone and context of the usage, litotes either retains the effect of understatement, or becomes an intensifying expression. Compare the difference between these statements:

- Heat waves are common in the summer.
- Heat waves are not rare in the summer.
- Hitting that telephone pole certainly didn't do your car any good.
- He who examines his own self will not long remain ignorant of his failings.
- Overall, the flavors of the mushrooms, herbs, and spices combine to make the dish not at all disagreeable to the palate.

But note that, as George Orwell points out in "Politics and the English Language," the "not un-" construction (for example, "not unwilling") should not be used indiscriminately. Rather, find an opposite quality which as a word is something other than the quality itself with an "un" attached. For instance, instead of, "We were not unvictorious," you could write, "We were not defeated," or "We did not fail to win," or something similar.

PARALLELISM

This is recurrent syntactical similarity. Several parts of a sentence or several sentences are expressed similarly to show that the ideas in the parts or sentences are equal in importance. Parallelism also adds balance and rhythm and, most importantly, clarity to the sentence. Any sentence elements can be paralleled; any number of times (though, of course, excess quickly becomes ridiculous). You might choose parallel subjects with parallel modifiers attached to them:

- Ferocious dragons breathing fire and wicked sorcerers casting their spells do their harm by night in the forest of Darkness.

Or parallel verbs and adverbs:

- I have always sought but seldom obtained a parking space near the door.
- Quickly and happily, he walked around the corner to buy the book.
- He liked to eat watermelon and to avoid grapefruit.

Or just the objects:

- This wealthy car collector owns three pastel Cadillacs, two gold Rolls Royces, and ten assorted Mercedes.

Or parallel prepositional phrases:

- He found it difficult to vote for an ideal truth but against his own self-interest.
- The pilot walked down the aisle, through the door, and into the cockpit, singing "Up, Up, and Away."

Notice how paralleling rather long subordinate clauses helps you to hold the whole sentence clearly in your head:

- These critics--who point out the beauties of style and ideas, who discover the faults of false constructions, and who discuss the application of the rules--usually help a lot in engendering an understanding of the writer's essay.
- When, at the conclusion of a prolonged episode of agonizing thought, you decide to buy this car; when, after a hundred frantic sessions of begging stone-faced bankers for the money, you can obtain sufficient funds; and when, after two more years of impatience and frustration, you finally get a driver's license, then come see me and we will talk about a deal.

It is also possible to parallel participial, infinitive, and gerund phrases:

- He left the engine on, idling erratically and heating rapidly.
- To think accurately and to write precisely are interrelated goals.
- She liked sneaking up to Ted and putting the ice cream down his back, because he was so cool about it.

In practice some combination of parts of speech or sentence elements is used to form a statement, depending as always on what you have to say. In addition, the parallelism, while it normally should be pretty close, does not have to be exact in its syntactical similarity. For example, you might write,

- He ran up to the bookshelves, grabbed a chair standing nearby, stepped painfully on his tiptoes, and pulled the fifty-pound volume on top of him, crushing his ribs and impressing him with the power of knowledge.

Here are some other examples of parallelism:

- I shall never envy the honors which wit and learning obtain in any other cause, if I can be numbered among the writers who have given ardor to virtue, and confidence to truth.
- They had great skill in optics, and had instructed him to see faults in others, and beauties in himself that could be discovered by nobody else.
- For the end of a theoretical science is truth, but the end of a practical science is performance.

CHIASMUS

This might be called "reverse parallelism," since the second part of a grammatical construction is balanced or paralleled by the first part, only in reverse order. Instead of an **A,B** structure (e.g., "learned unwillingly") paralleled by another **A,B** structure ("forgotten gladly"), the **A,B** will be followed by **B,A** ("gladly forgotten"). So instead of writing, "What is learned unwillingly is forgotten gladly," you could write, "What is learned unwillingly is gladly forgotten." Similarly, the parallel sentence, "What is now great was at first little," could be written chiastically as, "What is now great was little at first." Here are some examples:

- He labors without complaining and without bragging rests.
- Polished in courts and hardened in the field, Renowned for conquest, and in council skilled.
- For the Lord is a Great God…in whose hand are the depths of the earth; the peaks of the mountains are his also.

Prepositional phrases or other modifiers can also be moved around to form chiastic structures. Sometimes the effect is rather emphatic:

- Tell me not of your many perfections; of your great modesty tell me not either.
- Just as the term "menial" does not apply to any honest labor, so no dishonest work can be called "prestigious."

At other times the effect is more subdued but still desirable. Compare the versions of these sentences, written first in chiastic and then in strictly parallel form. Which do you like better in each case?

- On the way to school, my car ran out of gas; then it had a flat on the way home.
- On the way to school, my car ran out of gas; then on the way home it had a flat.
- Sitting together at lunch, the kids talked incessantly; but they said nothing at all sitting in the dentist's office.
- Sitting together at lunch, the kids talked incessantly; but sitting in the dentist's office, they said nothing at all.
- The computer mainframe is now on sale; available also at a discount is the peripheral equipment.
- The computer mainframe is now on sale; the peripheral equipment is also available at a discount.

Chiasmus may be useful for those sentences in which you want balance, but which cannot be paralleled effectively, either because they are too short, or because the emphasis is placed on the wrong words. And sometimes a chiastic structure will just seem to "work" when a parallel one will not.

ZEUGMA

This includes several similar rhetorical devices, all involving a grammatically correct linkage (or yoking together) of two or more parts of speech by another part of speech. Thus, examples of zeugmatic usage would include one subject with two (or more) verbs, a verb with two (or more) direct objects, two (or more) subjects with one verb, and so forth. The main benefit of the linking is that it shows relationships between ideas and actions more clearly.

In one form (prozeugma), the yoking word precedes the words yoked. So, for example, you could have a verb stated in the first clause understood in the following clauses:

- Pride opresseth humility; hatred love; cruelty compassion.
- Fred excelled at sports; Harvey at eating; Tom with girls.
- Alexander conquered the world; I, Tanzania.

A more important version of this form (with its own name, diazeugma) is the single subject with multiple verbs:

- Mr. Mahwahwa held his memory in high honor, and made a punchbowl of his skull.
- This terrace…took in an oblique view of the open sea, and fronted a long track of level sea-coast.
- Fluffy rolled on her back, raised her paws, and meowed to be petted.

Notice that two or three verb phrases are the usual proportion. But if you have a lot to say about the actions of the subject, or if you want to show a sort of multiplicity of behavior or doings, you can use several verbs:

- When at Nightmare Abbey, he would condole with Mr. Kimbwege, drink Serengeti Premium Lager with Mr. Manyonyi, crack jokes with Mr. Yowery, hand Madam Halima to the piano, take charge of her fan and gloves, and turn over her music with surprising dexterity, quote Revelations with Mr. Bunuma, and lament the good old times of feudal darkness with the Transcendental Mr. Adam.

Two or more subordinate relative pronoun clauses can be linked prozeugmatically, with the noun becoming the yoking word:

- His father, to comfort him, read him a Commentary on Ecclesiastes, which he had himself composed, and which demonstrated incontrovertibly that all is vanity.
- Books who alone are liberal and free, who give to all who ask of you and enfranchise all who serve you faithfully!

You could have two or more direct objects:

- With one mighty swing he knocked the ball through the window and two spectators off their chairs.
- He grabbed his hat from the rack in the closet, his gloves from the table near the door, and his car keys from the punchbowl.

Or a preposition with two objects:

- Mr. Madaha was horror-struck by the sight of a round, ruddy face, and a pair of laughing eyes.

Sometimes you might want to create a linkage in which the verb must be understood in a slightly different sense:

- He grabbed his hat from the rack by the stairs and a kiss from the lips of his wife.
- He smashed the clock into bits and his fist through the wall.

In hypozeugma the yoking word follows the words it yokes together. A common form is multiple subjects:

- Hours, days, weeks, months, and years do pass away.
- The moat at its base, and the fens beyond comprised the whole of his prospect.
- To generate that much electricity and to achieve that kind of durability would require a completely new generator design.

It is possible also to hold off a verb until the last clause:

- The little baby from his crib, the screaming lady off the roof, and the man from the flooded basement were all rescued.

Hypozeugma can be used with adjectives or adjective phrases, too. Here, Peacock uses two participial phrases, one past and one present:

- Disappointed both in love and in friendship, and looking upon human learning as vanity, he had come to a conclusion that there was but one good thing in the world, videlicet, a good dinner…

The utility of the zeugmatic devices lies partly in their economy (for they save repetition of subjects or verbs or other words), and partly in the connections they create between thoughts. The more connections between ideas you can make in an essay, whether those connections are simple transitional devices or more elaborate rhetorical ones, the fewer your reader will have to guess at, and therefore the clearer your points will be.

ANTITHESIS

This establishes a clear, contrasting relationship between two ideas by joining them together or juxtaposing them, often in parallel structure. Human beings are inveterate systematizers and categorizers, so the mind has a natural love for antithesis, which creates a definite and systematic relationship between ideas:

- To err is human; to forgive, divine.
- That short and easy trip made a lasting and profound change in Baraka's outlook.
- That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.

Antithesis can convey some sense of complexity in a person or idea by admitting opposite or nearly opposite truths:

- Though surprising, it is true; though frightening at first, it is really harmless.
- If we try, we might succeed; if we do not try, we cannot succeed.
- Success makes men proud; failure makes them wise.

Antithesis, because of its close juxtaposition and intentional contrast of two terms or ideas, is also very useful for making relatively fine distinctions or for clarifying differences which might be otherwise overlooked by a careless thinker or casual reader:

- In order that all men may be taught to speak truth, it is necessary that all likewise should learn to hear it.
- The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; so, practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice.
- I agree that it is legal; but my question was, Is it moral?
- The advertisement indeed says that these shoes are the best, but it means that they are equal; for in advertising "best" is a parity claim and only "better" indicates superiority.

ANAPHORA

This is the repetition of the same word or words at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, or sentences, commonly in conjunction with climax and with parallelism:

- To think on death, it is a misery, to think on life, it is a vanity; to think on the world verily it is, to think that here man hath no perfect bliss.
- In books I find the dead as if they were alive; in books I foresee things to come; in books warlike affairs are set forth; from books come forth the laws of peace.
- Finally, we must consider what pleasantness of teaching there is in books, how easy, how secret! How safely we lay bare the poverty of human ignorance to books without feeling any shame!
- The wish of the genuine painter must be more extensive: instead of endeavoring to amuse mankind with the minute neatness of his imitations, he must endeavor to improve them by the grandeur of his ideas; instead of seeking praise, by deceiving the superficial sense of the spectator, he must strive for fame by captivating the imagination.
- Slowly and grimly they advanced, not knowing what lay ahead, not knowing what they would find at the top of the hill, not knowing that they were so near to Lake Secondary School.
- They are the entertainment of minds unfurnished with ideas, and therefore easily susceptible of impressions; not fixed by principles, and therefore easily following the current of fancy; not informed by experience, and consequently open to every false suggestion and partial account.

Anaphora can be used with questions, negations, hypotheses, conclusions, and subordinating conjunctions, although care must be taken not to become affected or to sound rhetorical and bombastic. Consider these selections:

- Will he read the book? Will he learn what it has to teach him? Will he live according to what he has learned?
- Not time, not money, not laws, but willing diligence will get this done.
- If we can get the lantern lit, if we can find the main cave, and if we can see the stalagmites, I'll show you the one with the bat skeleton in it. be used for

Adverbs and prepositions can anaphora, too:

- They are masters who instruct us without rod or ferule, without angry words, without clothes or money.
- She stroked her kitty cat very softly, very slowly, very smoothly.

EPISTROPHE

(Also called antistrophe) forms the counterpart to anaphora, because the repetition of the same word or words comes at the end of successive phrases, clauses, or sentences:

- Where affections bear rule, there reason is subdued, honesty is subdued, good will is subdued, and all things else that withstand evil, forever are subdued.
- And all the night he did nothing but weep Anita, sigh Anita, and cry out Anita.
- You will find washing beakers helpful in passing this course, using the gas chromatograph desirable for passing this course, and studying hours on end essential to passing this course.

Epistrophe is an extremely emphatic device because of the emphasis placed on the last word in a phrase or sentence. If you have a concept you wish to stress heavily, then epistrophe might be a good construction to use. The danger as usual lies in this device's tendency to become too rhetorical. Consider whether these are successful and effective or hollow and bombastic:

- The cars do not sell because the engineering is inferior, the quality of materials is inferior, and the workmanship is inferior.
- The energies of mankind are often exerted in pursuit, consolidation, and enjoyment; which is to say, many men spend their lives pursuing power, consolidating power, and enjoying power.

ANADIPLOSIS

This repeats the last word of one phrase, clause, or sentence at or very near the beginning of the next. It can be generated in series for the sake of beauty or to give a sense of logical progression:

- Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know, knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain.

Most commonly, though, anadiplosis is used for emphasis of the repeated word or idea, since repetition has a reinforcing effect:

- They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.
- The question next arises, "How much confidence can we put in the people, when the people have elected Tundu Lissu?"
- This treatment plant has a record of uncommon reliability, a reliability envied by every other water treatment facility on the coast.
- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Notice how the main point of the sentence becomes immediately clear by repeating the same word twice in close succession. There can be no doubt about the focus of your thought when you use anadiplosis.

CONDUPLICATIO

This resembles anadiplosis in the repetition of a preceding word, but it repeats a key word (not just the last word) from a preceding phrase, clause, or sentence, at the beginning of the next.

- If this is the first time duty has moved him to act against his desires, he is a very weak man indeed. Duty should be cultivated and obeyed in spite of its frequent conflict with selfish wishes.
- The strength of the passions will never be accepted as an excuse for complying with them; the passions were designed for subjection, and if a man suffers them to get the upper hand, he then betrays the liberty of his own soul.
- She fed the goldfish every day with the new pellets brought from Japan. Gradually the goldfish began to turn a brighter orange than before.

Like anadiplosis, conduplicatio serves as an effective focusing device because with it you can pull out that important idea from the sentence before and put it clearly at the front of the new sentence, showing the reader just what he should be concentrating on.

Since keeping the reader focused on your train of thought is critical to good writing, this device can be especially helpful as a transitional connector when the previous sentence has two or more possible main points, only one of which is to be continued in the discussion.

Suppose, for example, you have this sentence:

- Submitting a constitutional amendment to a popular vote through a general referendum always runs the risk of a campaign and a vote based upon the selfishness rather than the sense of justice of the voter.

Now, the next sentence could begin with, "Previous campaigns . . ." or "The strength of the appeal to selfish interests . . . "or "Therefore constitutional amendments are best left. . ." all depending on which concept you wish to develop.

If you began the next sentence with, "But there certainly can be no doubt that the general referendum will continue to be exploited by those whose issues are aided by the innate selfishness of human beings," the reader would have to go a considerable distance into the sentence before he would find out exactly which idea is being carried forward and developed.

EPANALEPSIS
This repeats the beginning word of a clause or sentence at the end. The beginning and the end are the two positions of strongest emphasis in a sentence, so by having the same word in both places, you call special attention to it:

- Water alone dug this giant valley; yes, just plain water.
- To report that your committee is still investigating the matter is to tell me that you have nothing to report.

Many writers use epanalepsis in a kind of "yes, but" construction to cite common ground or admit a truth and then to show how that truth relates to a more important context:

- Our eyes saw it, but we could not believe our eyes.
- The theory sounds all wrong; but if the machine works, we cannot worry about theory.
- In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.

HYPOPHORA
This consists of raising one or more questions and then proceeding to answer them, usually at some length. A common usage is to ask the question at the beginning of a paragraph and then use that paragraph to answer it:

- There is a striking and basic difference between a man's ability to imagine something and an animal's failure. Where is it that the animal falls short? We get a clue to the answer, I think, when Hunter tells us…
- What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? What does the Scripture say?... "Abraham believed God."

This is an attractive rhetorical device, because asking an appropriate question appears quite natural and helps to maintain curiosity and interest. You can use hypophora to raise questions which you think the reader obviously has on his mind and would like to see formulated and answered:

- What behavior, then, is uniquely human? My theory is this…
- But what was the result of this move on the steel industry? The annual reports for that year clearly indicate…

Hypophora can also be used to raise questions or to introduce material of importance, but which the reader might not have the knowledge or thought to ask for himself:

- How then, in the middle of the twentieth century, are we to define the obligation of the historian to his facts?... The duty of the historian to respect his facts is not exhausted by…
- But it is certainly possible to ask, how hot is the oven at its hottest point, when the average temperature is 425 degrees? We learned that the peak temperatures approached…

And hypophora can be used as a transitional or guiding device to change directions or enter a new area of discussion:

- But what are the implications of this theory? And how can it be applied to the present problem?

- How and why did caveat emptor develop? The question presents us with mysteries never fully answered.

RHETORICAL QUESTION
(Erotesis) differs from hypophora in that it is not answered by the writer, because its answer is obvious or obviously desired, and usually just a yes or no. It is used for effect, emphasis, or provocation, or for drawing a conclusionary statement from the facts at hand.

- But how can we expect to enjoy the scenery when the scenery consists entirely of garish billboards?

- …For if we lose the ability to perceive our faults, what is the good of living on?
- Is justice then to be considered merely a word? Or is it whatever results from the bartering between attorneys?

Often the rhetorical question and its implied answer will lead to further discussion:

- Is this the end to which we are reduced? Is the disaster film the highest form of art we can expect from our era? Perhaps we should examine the alternatives presented by independent film maker John Baraka….
- I agree the funding and support are still minimal, but shouldn't worthy projects be tried, even though they are not certain to succeed? So, the plans in effect now should be expanded to include… [Note: Here is an example where the answer "yes" is clearly desired rhetorically by the writer, though conceivably someone might say "no" to the question if asked straightforwardly.]

Several rhetorical questions together can form a nicely developed and directed paragraph by changing a series of logical statements into queries:

- We shrink from change; yet is there anything that can come into being without it?
- What does Nature hold dearer, or more proper to herself? Could you have a hot bath unless the firewood underwent some change? Could you be nourished if the food suffered no change? Do you not see, then, that change in yourself is of the same order, and no less necessary to Nature?

Sometimes the desired answer to the rhetorical question is made obvious by the discussion preceding it:

- The gods, though they live forever, feel no resentment at having to put up eternally with the generations of men and their misdeeds; nay more, they even show every possible care and concern for them. Are you, then, whose abiding is but for a moment, to lose patience--you who are yourself one of the culprits?

When you are thinking about a rhetorical question, be careful to avoid sinking to absurdity. You would not want to ask, for example, "But is it right to burn down the campus and sack the bookstore?" The use of this device allows your reader to think, query, and conclude along with you; but if your questions become ridiculous, your essay may become wastepaper.

PROCATALEPSIS

By anticipating an objection and answering it, this permits an argument to continue moving forward while taking into account points or reasons opposing either the train of thought or its final conclusions. Often the objections are standard ones:

- It is usually argued at this point that if the government gets out of the mail delivery business, small towns like Kisesa will not have any mail service. The answer to this can be found in the history of Posta…
- To discuss trivialities in an exalted style is, as the saying is, like beautifying a pestle. Yet some people say we should discourse in the grand manner on trivialities and they think that this is a proof of outstanding oratorical talent. Now I admit that Polycrates [did this]. But he was doing this in jest… and the dignified tone of the whole work was itself a game. Let us be playful, [but] also observe what is fitting in each case…

Sometimes the writer will invent probable or possible difficulties in order to strengthen his position by showing how they could be handled if they should arise, as well as to present an answer in case the reader or someone else might raise them in the course of subsequent consideration:

- But someone might say that this battle really had no effect on history. Such a statement could arise only from ignoring the effect the battle had on the career of General Bombast, who was later a principal figure at the Battle of the Bulge.

- I can think of no one objection that will possibly be raised against this proposal, unless it should be urged that the number of people will be thereby much lessened in the kingdom. This I freely own, and it was indeed the principal design in offering it to the world.

Objections can be treated with varying degrees of seriousness and with differing relationships to the reader. The reader himself might be the objector:

- Yet this is the prime service a man would think, wherein this order should give proof of itself. If it were executed, you'll say. But certain, if execution be remiss or blindfold now, and in this particular, what will it be hereafter and in other books?

Or the objector may be someone whose outlook, attitude, or belief differs substantially from both writer and reader-though you should be careful not to set up an artificial, straw-man objector:

- Men of cold fancies and philosophical dispositions object to this kind of poetry, [saying] that it has not probability enough to affect the imagination. But to this it may be answered that we are sure, in general, there are many intellectual beings in the world besides ourselves…who are subject to different laws and economies from those of mankind….
- Occasionally a person of rash judgment will argue here that the high-speed motor is better than the low-speed one, because for the same output, high speed motors are lighter, smaller, and cheaper. But they are also noisier and less efficient, and have much greater wear and shorter life; so that overall, they are not better.

By mentioning the obvious, and even the imaginatively discovered objections to your argument, you show that (1) you are aware of them and have considered them and (2) there is some kind of reasonable response to them, whether given in a sentence or in several paragraphs. An objection answered in advance is weakened should your opponent bring it up, while an objection ignored, if brought up, may show you to be either ignorant or dishonest. Indeed, it might be better to admit an objection you cannot answer than to suppress it and put yourself on the side of darkness and sophistry:

- Those favoring the other edition argue that the same words in this text cost more money. This I admit, and it does seem unfortunate to pay twice the price for essentially the same thing. Nevertheless, this text has larger type, is made better, and above all has more informative notes, so I think it is worth the difference.

Finally, note that procatalepsis can be combined with hypophora, so that the objection is presented in the form of a question:

- I now come to the precepts of Alpha, and pretend to show from them that the greatest sublimity is to be derived from religious ideas. But why then, says the reader, has not Alpha plainly told us so? He was not ignorant that he ought to make his subject as plain as he could. For he has told us.
- But you might object that, if what I say is actually true, why would people buy products advertised illogically? The answer to that lies in human psychology…

METABASIS

This consists of a brief statement of what has been said and what will follow. It might be called a linking, running, or transitional summary, whose function is to keep the discussion ordered and clear in its progress:

- Such, then, would be my diagnosis of the present condition of art. I must now, by special request, say what I think will happen to art in the future.
- We have to this point been examining the proposal advanced by Pranavi only in regard to its legal practicability; but next we need to consider the effect it would have in retarding research and development work in private laboratories.

The brief little summary of what has been said helps the reader immensely to understand, organize, and remember that portion of your essay.

It can also be used to clarify the movement of a discussion by quickly summing up large sections of preceding material:

- By the foregoing quotation I have shown that the language of prose may yet be well adapted to poetry; and I have previously asserted that a large portion of the language of every good poem can in no respect differ from that of good prose. I will go further. I do not doubt that it may be safely affirmed, that there neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.
- Having thus explained a few of the reasons why I have written in verse, and why I have chosen subjects from common life, and endeavored to bring my language near to the real language of men, …I request the reader's permission to add a few words with reference solely to these particular poems and to some defects which will probably be found in them.
- Now that we have discussed the different kinds of cactus plants available to the landscape architect, their physical requirements for sun, soil, irrigation, and drainage, and the typical design groupings selected for residential areas, we ought to examine the architectural contexts which can best use-enhance and be enhanced by--cactus planters and gardens.

One caution should be mentioned. Metabasis is very difficult to use effectively in short papers: since it is a summarizing device, it must have some discussion to sum up. In practice, this means something on the order of five pages or more. Thus, metabasis could be very handy in the middle of a ten or twenty-page paper; in a three-page paper, though, both its necessity and its utility would be questionable. But use your own judgment.

Words used to signal further discussion after the summary includes these: **now, next, additionally, further, besides, equally important, also interesting, also important, also necessary to mention, it remains**. You can also use words of comparison and contrast, such as these: **similarly, on the other hand, by contrast**.

AMPLIFICATION

This involves repeating a word or expression while adding more detail to it, in order to emphasize what might otherwise be passed over. In other words, amplification allows you to call attention to, emphasize, and expand a word or idea to make sure the reader realizes its importance or centrality in the discussion.

- In my hunger after ten days of rigorous dieting, I saw visions of ice cream-mountains of creamy, luscious ice cream, dripping with gooey syrup and calories.
- This orchard, this lovely, shady orchard, is the main reason I bought this property.
- …Even in Leonardo's time, there were certain obscure needs and patterns of the spirit, which could discover themselves only through less precise analogies— the analogies provided by stains on walls or the embers of a fire.
- Pride--boundless pride--is the bane of civilization.
- He showed a rather simple taste, a taste for good art, good food, and good friends.

But amplification can overlap with or include a repetitive device like anaphora when the repeated word gains further definition or detail:

- The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, A refuge in times of trouble.

Notice the much greater effectiveness this repetition-plus detail form can have over a "straight" syntax. Compare each of these pairs:

- The utmost that we can threaten to one another is death, a death which, indeed, we may precipitate, but cannot retard, and from which, therefore, it cannot become a wise man to buy a

reprieve at the expense of virtue, since he knows not how small a portion of time he can purchase, but knows that, whether short or long, it will be made less valuable by the remembrance of the price at which it has been obtained.

- The utmost that we can threaten to one another is that death which, indeed, we may precipitate.
- In everything remember the passing of time, a time which cannot be called again.
- In everything remember the passing of a time which cannot be called again.

SCESIS ONOMATON

This emphasizes an idea by expressing it in a string of generally synonymous phrases or statements. While it should be used carefully, this deliberate and obvious restatement can be quite effective:

- We succeeded, we were victorious, we accomplished the feat!
- A sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that deal corruptly.
- But there is one thing these glassy-eyed idealists forget: such a scheme would be extremely costly, horrendously expensive, and require a ton of money.
- Wendy lay there, motionless in a peaceful slumber, very still in the arms of sleep.
- May God arise, may his enemies be scattered, may his foes flee before him.

Scesis onomaton does have a tendency to call attention to itself and to be repetitive, so it is not used in formal writing as frequently as some other devices. But if well done, it is both beautiful and emphatic.

APOPHASIS

(Also called **praeteritio** or **occupatio**) asserts or emphasizes something by pointedly seeming to pass over, ignore, or deny it. This device has both legitimate and illegitimate uses. Legitimately, a writer uses it to call attention to sensitive or inflammatory facts or statements while he remains apparently detached from them:

- We will not bring up the matter of the budget deficit here, or how programs like the one under consideration have nearly pushed us into bankruptcy, because other reasons clearly enough show…
- Therefore, let no man talk to me of other expedients: of taxing our absentees… of curing the expensiveness of pride, vanity, idleness, and gaming of learning to love our country…
- I will not even mention Houdini's many writings, both on magic and other subjects, nor the tricks he invented, nor his numerous impressive escapes, since I want to concentrate on…

Apophasis is handy for reminding people of something in a polite way:

- Of course, I do not need to mention that you should bring a No. 2 pencil to the exam.
- Nothing need be said here about the non-energy uses of coal, such as the manufacture of plastics, drugs, and industrial chemicals…

Some useful phrases for apophasis: nothing need be said about, I pass over, it need not be said (or mentioned), I will not mention (or dwell on or bring up), we will overlook ' I do not mean to suggest (or imply), you need not be reminded, it is unnecessary to bring up, we can forget about, no one would suggest.

APORIA

This device expresses doubt about an idea or conclusion. Among its several uses is the suggesting of alternatives without making a commitment to either or any:

- I am not sure whether to side with those who say that higher taxes reduce inflation or with those who say that higher taxes increase inflation.
- I have never been able to decide whether I really approve of dress codes, because extremism seems to reign both with them and without them.

Such a statement of uncertainty can tie off a piece of discussion you do not have time to pursue, or it could begin an examination of the issue, and lead you into a conclusion resolving your doubt.

Aporia can also dismiss assertions irrelevant to your discussion without either conceding or denying them:

- I do not know whether this legislation will work all the miracles promised by its backers, but it does seem clear that…
- I am not sure about the other reasons offered in favor of the new freeway, but I do believe…
- Yes, I know the assay report shows twenty pounds of gold per ton of ore, and I do not know what to say about that. What I do know is that the richest South African mines yield only about three ounces of gold per ton.

You can use aporia to cast doubt in a modest way, as a kind of understatement:

- I am not so sure I can accept Tom's reasons for wanting another new jet.
- I have not yet been fully convinced that dorm living surpasses living at home. For one thing, there is no refrigerator nearby…

Ironic doubt, doubt about which of several closely judgable things exceeds the others,
For example:

- …Whether he took them from his fellows more impudently, gave them to a harlot more lasciviously, removed them from the Roman people more wickedly, or altered them more presumptuously, I cannot well declare.
- And who was genuinely most content--whether old Mr. Ogweyo dozing in the sun, or Shrita and Pranavi holding hands and toying under the Mango tree, or old Mr. Bunuma watching them agape through the binoculars… I cannot really say. And you can display ignorance about something while still showing your attitude toward it or toward something else:
- It is hard to know which ice cream is better, banana or coffee.
- I have often wondered whether they realize that those same clothes are available for half the price under a different label.

SIMILE
This is a comparison between two different things that resemble each other in at least one way. In formal prose the simile is a device both of art and explanation, comparing an unfamiliar thing to some familiar thing (an object, event, process, etc.) known to the reader. When you compare a noun to a noun, the simile is usually introduced by like:

- I see men, but they look like trees, walking.
- After such long exposure to the direct sun, the leaves of the houseplant looked like pieces of overcooked bacon.
- The soul in the body is like a bird in a cage.

When a verb or phrase is compared to a verb or phrase, as is used:

- They remained constantly attentive to their goal, as a sunflower always turns and stays focused on the sun.
- Here are your pencil and paper. I want you to compete as the greatest hero would in the race of his life.

Often the simile, the object or circumstances of imaginative identity (called the vehicle, since it carries or conveys a meaning about the word or thing which is likened to it) - precedes the thing likened to it (the tenor). In such cases, so usually shows the comparison:

- The grass bends with every wind; so, does Onyango.

But sometimes the so is understood rather than expressed:

- As wax melts before the fire, may the wicked perish before God.

Whenever it is not immediately clear to the reader, the point of similarity between the unlike objects must be specified to avoid confusion and vagueness. Rather than say, then, that "Money is like muck," and "Fortune is like glass," a writer will show clearly how these very different things are like each other:

- And money is like muck, not good except it be spread.
- Fortune is like glass--the brighter the glitter, the more easily broken.
- Mange now felt like an old adding machine: he had been punched and poked so much that he had finally worn out.
- This paper is just like an accountant's report: precise and accurate but absolutely useless.

Many times, the point of similarity can be expressed in just a word or two:

- Yes, he is a cute puppy, but when he grows up, he will be as big as a house.

Similes can be negative, too, asserting that two things are unlike in one or more respects:

- My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun…
- John certainly does not attack the way a Russian tank does; but if you encourage him, he is bold enough.

Other ways to create similes include the use of comparison:

- Shrita was more anxious to leave the area than Pranavi after seeing ten abominable monkeys charging her way with hunger in their eyes.
- But this truth is more obvious than the sun--here it is; look at it; its brightness blinds you.

Or the use of another comparative word is possible:

- Microcomputer EPROM (Erasable Programmable Read Only Memory) resembles a chalk board in that it is used for consultation instead of figuring, and shows at each glance the same information unless erased and rewritten.
- His temper reminds me of a volcano; his heart, of a rock; his personality, of sandpaper.
- His speech was smoother than butter…

So, a variety of ways exists for invoking the simile. Here are a few of the possibilities:

X IS LIKE **Y**,	**X** IS NOT LIKE **Y**,	**X** IS THE SAME AS **Y**
X IS MORE THAN **Y**,	**X** IS LESS THAN **Y**,	**X** DOES **Y**; SO DOES **Z**
X IS SIMILAR TO **Y**,	**X** RESEMBLES **Y**,	**X** IS AS **Y** AS **Z**
X IS **Y** LIKE **Z**,	**X** IS MORE **Y** THAN **Z**,	**X** IS LESS **Y** THAN **Z**

But a simile can sometimes be implied, or as it is often called, submerged. In such cases no comparative word is needed:

- The author of this poem is almost in the position of a man with boxes and boxes of tree ornaments, but with no tree to decorate. The poet has enough imagery handy to decorate anything he can think of, if only he can fix upon a "trim invention." The "sense" he does locate is obscured; the ivy hides the building completely.
- When I think of the English final exam, I think of dungeons and chains and racks and primal screams.
- Nabeela has silky hair and the skin of an angel.

ANALOGY

This compares two things, which are alike in several respects, for the purpose of explaining or clarifying some unfamiliar or difficult idea or object by showing how the idea or object is similar to some familiar one. While simile and analogy often overlap, the simile is generally a more artistic likening, done briefly for effect and emphasis, while analogy serves the more practical end of explaining a thought process or a line of reasoning or the abstract in terms of the concrete, and may therefore be more extended.

- You may abuse a tragedy, though you cannot write one. You may scold a carpenter who has made you a bad table, though you cannot make a table. It is not your trade to make tables.
- He that voluntarily continues ignorance is guilty of all the crimes which ignorance produces, as to him that should extinguish the tapers of a lighthouse might justly be imputed the calamities of shipwrecks.
- . . . For answers successfully arrived at are solutions to difficulties previously discussed, and one cannot untie a knot if he is ignorant of it.

Notice in these examples that the analogy is used to establish the pattern of reasoning by using a familiar or less abstract argument which the reader can understand easily and probably agree with.

Some analogies simply offer an explanation for clarification rather than a substitute argument:

- Knowledge always desires increase: it is like fire, which must first be kindled by some external agent, but which will afterwards propagate itself.
- The beginning of all evil temptations is inconstancy of mind, and too little trust in God. For as a ship without a guide is driven hither and thither with every storm, so an unstable man, that anon leaveth his good purpose in God, is diversely tempted. The fire proveth gold, and temptation proveth the righteous man.

When the matter is complex and the analogy particularly useful for explaining it, the analogy can be extended into a rather long, multiple-point comparison:

- The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So, it is with Christ.

METAPHOR

This compares two different things by speaking of one in terms of the other. Unlike a simile or analogy, metaphor asserts that one thing is another thing. Not just that one is like another. Very frequently a metaphor is invoked by the "**to be verb**":

- Affliction then is ours; we are the trees whom shaking fastens more.
- Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life."
- Thus, a mind that is free from passion is a very citadel; man has no stronger fortress in which to seek shelter and defy every assault. Failure to perceive this is ignorance; but to perceive it, and still not to seek its refuge, is misfortune indeed.
- The mind is but a barren soil; a soil which is soon exhausted and will produce no crop, or only one, unless it be continually fertilized and enriched with foreign matter.

Just as frequently, though, the comparison is clear enough that the **a**-is-**b** form is not necessary:

- The fountain of knowledge will dry up unless it is continuously replenished by streams of new learning.
- I wonder when motor mouth is going to run out of gas.
- When it comes to midterms, it's kill or be killed. Let's go in and slay this test.
- What sort of a monster then is man? What a novelty, what a portent, what a chaos, what a mass of contradictions, what a prodigy! Judge of all things, a ridiculous earthworm who is the repository of truth, a sink of uncertainty and error; the glory and the scum of the world.
- The most learned philosopher knew little more. He had partially unveiled the face of Nature,

but her immortal lineaments were still a wonder and a mystery. I had gazed upon the fortifications and impediments that seemed to keep human beings from entering the citadel of nature, and rashly and ignorantly I had repined.

- The furnace of affliction had softened his heart and purified his soul.

Compare the different degrees of direct identification between tenor and vehicle. There is fully expressed:

- Your eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is sound, your whole body is full of light; but when it is not sound, your body is full of darkness.

Here, the comparison, "the eye is a lamp," is declared directly, and the point of similarity is spelled out.

There is semi-implied:

- And he said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course.'"

Here, the comparison, "Herod is a fox," is not directly stated, but is understood as if it had been.

You might write, "The candle was a little sun in the dark room," but you wouldn't write, "The sun was a big candle that day in the desert." In **Psalm 63,** however, there is nothing greater than God to compare him to, and the psalmist wants to create a sense of tenderness and protection, drawing upon a familiar image. So, the comparison is saved by using an implied metaphor.

- For if men do these things when the tree is green what will happen when it is dry?

Here the comparison is something like "a prosperous time [or freedom from persecution] is a green [flourishing, healthy] tree." And the other half of the metaphor is that "a time of persecution or lack of prosperity is a dry [unhealthy, dead(?)] tree." So, the rhetorical question is, "If men do these [bad] things during times of prosperity, what will they do when persecution or their own suffering arrives?"

Like simile and analogy, metaphor is a profoundly important and useful device. Aristotle says in his Rhetoric, "It is metaphor above all else that gives clearness, charm, and distinction to the style." And Joseph Addison says of it:

- By these allusions a truth in the understanding is as it were reflected by the imagination; we are able to see something like color and shape in a notion, and to discover a scheme of thoughts traced out upon matter. And here the mind receives a great deal of satisfaction, and has two of its faculties gratified at the same time, while the fancy is busy in copying after the understanding, and transcribing ideas out of the intellectual world into the material.

So, a metaphor not only explains by making the abstract or unknown concrete and familiar, but it also enlivens by touching the reader's imagination. Further, it affirms one more interconnection in the unity of all things by showing a relationship between things seemingly alien to each other.

And the fact that two very unlike things can be equated or referred to in terms of one another comments upon them both. No metaphor is "just a metaphor." All have significant implications, and they must be chosen carefully, especially in regard to the connotations the vehicle (image) will transfer to the tenor. Consider, for example, the differences in meaning conveyed by these statements:

- That club is spreading like wildfire.
- That club is spreading like cancer.
- That club is really blossoming now.
- That club, in its amoebic motions, is engulfing the campus.

And do you see any reason that one of these metaphors was chosen over the others?

- The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.
- The diamonds cover the ground, but we need more people to pick them up.

CATACHRESIS

This is an extravagant, implied metaphor using words in an alien or unusual way. While difficult to invent, it can be wonderfully effective:

- I will speak daggers to her. [In a more futuristic metaphor, we might say, "I will laser-tongue her." Or as a more romantic student suggested, "I will speak flowers to her."]

One way to write catachresis is to substitute an associated idea for the intended one (as Hamlet did, using "daggers" instead of "angry words"):

- "It's a dentured lake," he said, pointing at the dam. "Break a tooth out of that grin and she will spit all the way to Duganville."

Sometimes you can substitute a noun for a verb or a verb for a noun, a noun for an adjective, and so on. The key is to be effective rather than abysmal. I am not sure which classification these examples fit into:

- The little old lady turtled along at ten miles per hour.
- She typed the paper machine-gunnedly, without pausing at all.
- They had expected that this news would paint an original grief, but the only result was silk-screamed platitudes.
- Give him a quart or two of self-esteem and he will stop knocking himself. [This was intended to suggest motor oil; if it makes you think of cheap gin, the metaphor did not work.]

SYNECDOCHE

This is a type of metaphor in which the part stands for the whole, the whole for a part, the genus for the species, the species for the genus, the material for the thing made, or in short, any portion, section, or main quality for the whole or the thing itself (or vice versa).

- Farmer Jones has two hundred head of cattle and three hired hands.

Here we recognize that Jones also owns the bodies of the cattle, and that the hired hands have bodies attached.

This is a simple part-for-whole synecdoche. Here are a few more:

- If I had some wheels, I'd put on my best threads and ask for Jane's hand in marriage.
- The army included two hundred horse and three hundred foot.
- It is sure hard to earn a dollar these days.
- Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

And notice the other kinds of substitutions that can be made:

- Get in here this instant or I'll spank your body. [Whole for part--i.e. "body" for "rear end"]
- He drew his steel from his scabbard and welcomed all comers. [Material for thing made]
- Patty's hobby is exposing film; Harold's is burning up gasoline in his dune buggy. [Part for whole]

One of the easiest kinds of synecdoche to write is the substitution of genus for species. Here you choose the class to which the idea or thing to be expressed belongs, and use that rather than the idea or thing itself:

- There sits my animal [instead of "dog"] guarding the door to the henhouse.
- He hurled the barbed weapon [instead of "harpoon"] at the whale.

A possible problem can arise with the genus-for-species substitution because the movement is from more specific to more general; this can result in vagueness and loss of information. Note that in the example above some additional contextual information will be needed to clarify that "weapon" means "harpoon" in this case, rather than, say, "dagger" or something else. The same is true for the animal-for-dog substitution.

Perhaps a better substitution is the species for the genus--a single, specific, representative item symbolic of the whole. This form of synecdoche will usually be clearer and more effective than the other:

- A major lesson Americans need to learn is that life consists of more than cars and television sets. [Two specific items substituted for the concept of material wealth]
- Give us this day our daily bread.
- If you still do not feel well, you'd better call up a sawbones and have him examine you.
- This program is for the little old lady in Cleveland who cannot afford to pay her heating bill.

METONYMY

This is another form of metaphor, very similar to synecdoche (and, in fact, some rhetoricians do not distinguish between the two), in which the thing chosen for the metaphorical image is closely associated with (but not an actual part of) the subject with which it is to be compared.

- The orders came directly from the White House.

In this example we know that the writer means the President issued the orders, because "White House" is quite closely associated with "President," even though it is not physically a part of him. Consider these substitutions, and notice that some are more obvious than others, but that in context all are clear:

- You can't fight city hall.
- This land belongs to the crown.
- In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread...
- Boy, I'm dying from the heat. Just look how the mercury is rising.
- His blood be on us and on our children.
- The checkered flag waved and victory crossed the finish line.
- Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.
- Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

The use of a particular metonymy makes a comment about the idea for which it has been substituted, and thereby helps to define that idea. Note how much more vivid "in the sweat of thy face" is in the third example above than "by labor" would have been. And in the fourth example, "mercury rising" has a more graphic, physical, and pictorial effect than would "temperature increasing." Attune yourself to such subtleties of language, and study the effects of connotation, suggestion, substitution, and metaphor.

PERSONIFICATION

This metaphorically represents an animal or inanimate object as having human attributes, attributes of form, character, feelings, behavior, and so on. Ideas and abstractions can also be personified.

- The ship began to creak and protest as it struggled against the rising sea.
- We bought this house instead of the one on Maple because this one is more
- This coffee is strong enough to get up and walk away.
- I can't get the fuel pump back on because this bolt is being uncooperative.
- Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.
- That ignorance and perverseness should always obtain what they like was never considered as the end of government; of which it is the great and standing benefit that the wise see for the simple, and the regular act for the capricious.
- Wisdom cries aloud in the streets; in the markets she raises her voice…

While personification functions primarily as a device of art, it can often serve to make an abstraction clearer and more real to the reader by defining or explaining the concept in terms of everyday human action (as for example man's rejection of readily available wisdom is presented as a woman crying out to be heard but being ignored). Ideas can be brought to life through personification and objects can be given greater interest. But try always to be fresh: "winking stars" is worn out; "winking dewdrops" may be all right.

Personification of just the natural world has its own name, **fictio**. And when this natural world personification is limited to emotion, John Ruskin called it the **pathetic fallacy**. Ruskin considered this latter to be a vice because it was so often overdone (and let this be a caution to you). We do not receive much pleasure from an overwrought vision like this:

- The angry clouds in the hateful sky cruelly spat down on the poor man who had forgotten his umbrella.

Nevertheless, humanizing a cold abstraction or even some natural phenomenon gives us a way to understand it, one more way to arrange the world in our own terms, so that we can further comprehend it. And even the so-called pathetic fallacy can sometimes be turned to advantage, when the writer sees his own feelings in the inanimate world around him:

- After two hours of political platitudes, everyone grew bored. The delegates were bored; the guests were bored; the speaker himself was bored. Even the chairs were bored.

HYPERBOLE

This is the counterpart of understatement, deliberately exaggerates conditions for emphasis or effect. In formal writing the hyperbole must be clearly intended as an exaggeration, and should be carefully restricted. That is, do not exaggerate everything, but treat hyperbole like an exclamation point, to be used only once a year. Then it will be quite effective as a table-thumping attention getter, introductory to your essay or some section thereof:

- There are a thousand reasons why more research is needed on solar energy. Or it can make a single point very enthusiastically:
- I said "rare," not "raw." I've seen cows hurt worse than this get up and get well.

Or you can exaggerate one thing to show how really different it is from something supposedly similar to which it is being compared:

- This stuff is used motor oil compared to the coffee you make, my love.
- If anyone comes to me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

Hyperbole is the most overused and overdone rhetorical figure in the whole world (and that is no hyperbole); we are a society of excess and exaggeration. Nevertheless, hyperbole still has a rightful and useful place in art and letters; just handle it like dynamite, and do not blow up everything you can find.

ALLUSION

This is a short, informal reference to a famous person or event:

- If you take his parking place, you can expect World War II all over again.
- Plan ahead: it wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.

Notice in these examples that the allusions are to very well-known characters or events, not to obscure ones. (The best sources for allusions are literature, history, Greek myth, and the Bible.) Note also that the reference serves to explain or clarify or enhance whatever subject is under discussion, without sidetracking the reader.

Allusion can be wonderfully attractive in your writing because it can introduce variety and energy into an otherwise limited discussion (an exciting historical adventure rises suddenly in the middle of a discussion of chemicals or some abstract argument), and it can please the reader by reminding him of a pertinent story or figure with which he is familiar, thus helping (like analogy) to explain something difficult. The instantaneous pause and reflection on the analogy refreshes and strengthens the reader's mind.

EPONYM

Eponym substitutes for a particular attribute the name of a famous person recognized for that attribute. By their nature eponyms often border on the cliche, but many times they can be useful without seeming too obviously trite. Finding new or infrequently used ones is best, though hard, because the name-and-attribute relationship needs to be well established. Consider the effectiveness of these:

- Is he smart? Why, the man is an Einstein. Has he suffered? This poor Job can tell you himself.
- We all must realize that Uncle Sam is not supposed to be Santa Claus.
- An earthworm is the Hercules of the soil.

In cases where the eponym might be less than clear or famous, you should add the quality to it:

- The wisdom of a Solomon was needed to figure out the actions of the appliance marketplace this quarter.

OXYMORON

This is a paradox reduced to two words, usually in an adjective-noun ("eloquent silence") or adverb-adjective ("inertly strong") relationship, and is used for effect, complexity, emphasis, or wit:

- I do here make humbly bold to present them with a short account of themselves and their art…
- The bookful blockhead, ignorantly read, with loads of learned lumber in his head…
- He was now sufficiently composed to order a funeral of modest magnificence, suitable at once to the rank of a Nouradin's profession, and the reputation of his wealth.

Oxymoron can be useful when things have gone contrary to expectation, belief, desire, or assertion, or when your position is opposite to another's which you are discussing. The figure then produces an ironic contrast which shows, in your view, how something has been misunderstood or mislabeled:

- Senator Onyango calls this a useless plan; if so, it is the most helpful useless plan we have ever enacted.
- The cost-saving program became an expensive economy.

Other oxymorons, as more or less true paradoxes, show the complexity of a situation where two apparently opposite things are true simultaneously, either literally ("desirable calamity") or imaginatively ("love precipitates delay"). Some examples other writers have used are these: scandalously nice, sublimely bad, darkness visible, cheerful pessimist, sad joy, wise fool, tender cruelty, despairing hope, freezing fire. An oxymoron should preferably be yours uniquely; do not use another's, unless it is a relatively obvious formulation (like "expensive economy") which anyone might think of. Also, the device is most effective when the terms are not common opposites. So, instead of "a low high point," you might try "depressed apex" or something.

EPITHET

This is an adjective or adjective phrase appropriately qualifying a subject (noun) by naming a key or important characteristic of the subject, as in "laughing happiness," "sneering contempt," "untroubled sleep," "peaceful dawn," and "life-giving water." Sometimes a metaphorical epithet will be good to use, as in "lazy road," "tired landscape," "smirking billboards," "anxious apple." Aptness and brilliant effectiveness are the key considerations in choosing epithets. Be fresh, seek striking images, pay attention to connotative value.

A transferred epithet is an adjective modifying a noun which it does not normally modify, but which makes figurative sense:

- At length I heard a ragged noise and mirth of thieves and murderers…
- Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold, a sheep hook…
- In an age of pressurized happiness, we sometimes grow insensitive to subtle joys.

The striking and unusual quality of the transferred epithet calls attention to it, and it can therefore be used to introduce emphatically an idea you plan to develop. The phrase will stay with the reader, so there is no need to repeat it, for that would make it too obviously rhetorical and even a little annoying.

Thus, if you introduce the phrase, "diluted electricity," your subsequent development ought to return to more mundane synonyms, such as "low voltage," "brownouts," and so forth. It may be best to save your transferred epithet for a space near the conclusion of the discussion where it will be not only clearer (as a synonym for previously stated and clearly understandable terms) but more effective, as a kind of final, quintessential, and yet novel conceptualization of the issue. The reader will love it.

HYPERBATON

This includes several rhetorical devices involving departure from normal word order. One device, a form of inversion, might be called delayed epithet, since the adjective follows the noun. If you want to amplify the adjective, the inversion is very useful:

- From his seat on the bench, he saw the girl content-content with the promise that she could ride on the train again next week.

But the delayed epithet can also be used by itself, though in only a relatively few cases:

- She had a personality indescribable.
- His was a countenance sad.

Some rhetoricians condemn delayed epithet altogether in formal writing because of its potential for abuse. Each case must be tested carefully, to make sure it does not sound too poetic:

- His was a countenance friendly.
- These are rumors strange.

And specially make sure the phrase is not affected, offensive, or even disgusting:

- Welcome to our home comfortable.
- That is a story amazing.

I cannot give you a rule (why does "countenance sad" seem okay when "countenance friendly" does not?) other than to consult your own taste or sense of what sounds all right and what does not.

A similar form of inversion we might call divided epithets. Here two adjectives are separated by the noun they modify, as in Milton's "with wandering steps and slow." Once again, be careful, but go ahead and try it. Some examples:

- It was a long operation but successful.
- Let's go on a cooler day and less busy.
- So many pages will require a longer staple, heavy-duty style.

Another form of hyperbaton involves the separation of words normally belonging together, done for effect or convenience:

- In this room there sit twenty (though I will not name them) distinguished people. You can emphasize a verb by putting it at the end of the sentence:
- We will not, from this house, under any circumstances, be evicted.
- Sharmila, after a long struggle, all the way across the lake, finally swam to shore.

You might want to have a friend check your excursions into hyperbatonic syntax, and if he looks at you askance and says, "My, talk funny you do," you might want to do a little rewriting. But, again, do not mark this off your list just because you might not be always successful at it.

PARENTHESIS

This is a final form of hyperbaton, consists of a word, phrase, or whole sentence inserted as an aside in the middle of another sentence:

- But the new calculations--and here we see the value of relying upon up-to-date information--showed that man-powered flight was possible with this design.
- Every time I try to think of a good rhetorical example, I rack my brains but—you guessed--nothing happens.
- As the earthy portion has its origin from earth, the watery from a different element, my breath from one source and my hot and fiery parts from another of their own elsewhere (for nothing comes from nothing, or can return to nothing), so too there must be an origin for the mind.
- But in whatever respect anyone else is bold (I speak in foolishness), I am just as bold myself.

The violence involved in jumping into (or out of) the middle of your sentence to address the reader momentarily about something has a pronounced effect. Parenthesis can be circumscribed either by dashes--they are more dramatic and forceful--or by parentheses (to make your aside less stringent). This device creates the effect of extemporaneity and immediacy: you are relating some fact when suddenly something very important arises, or else you cannot resist an instant comment, so you just stop the sentence and the thought you are on right where they are and insert the fact or comment.

The parenthetical form also serves to give some statements a context (stuffed right into the middle of another sentence at the most pertinent point) which they would not have if they had to be written as complete sentences following another sentence. Note that in the first example above the bit of moralizing placed into the sentence appears to be more natural and acceptable than if it were stated separately as a kind of moral conclusion, which was not the purpose or drift of the article.

ALLITERATION

This is the recurrence of initial consonant sounds. The repetition can be juxtaposed (and then it is usually limited to two words):

- Ah, what a **d**elicious **d**ay!
- Yes, I have read that little bundle of **p**ernicious **p**rose, but I have no comment to make upon it.

Done well, alliteration is a satisfying sensation.

This two-word alliteration calls attention to the phrase and fixes it in the reader's mind, and so is useful for emphasis as well as art. Often, though, several words not next to each other are alliterated in a sentence. Here the use is more artistic. And note in the second example how wonderfully alliteration combines with antithesis:

- I shall delight to hear the ocean roar, or see the stars twinkle, in the company of men to whom Nature does not spread her volumes or utter her voice in vain.
- Do not let such evils overwhelm you as thousands have suffered, and thousands have surmounted; but turn your thoughts with vigor to some other plan of life, and keep always in your mind, that, with due submission to Providence, a man of genius has been seldom ruined but by himself.
- I conceive therefore, as to the business of being profound, that it is with writers, as with wells; a person with good eyes may see to the bottom of the deepest, provided any water be there; and that often, when there is nothing in the world at the bottom, besides dryness and dirt, though it be but a yard and a half underground, it shall pass, however, for wondrous deep, upon no wiser a reason than because it is wondrous dark.

ONOMATOPOEIA

This is the use of words whose pronunciation imitates the sound the word describes. "Buzz," for example, when spoken is intended to resemble the sound of a flying insect. Other examples include these: slam, pow, screech, whirr, crush, sizzle, crunch, wring, wrench, gouge, grind, mangle, bang, blam, pow, zap, fizz, urp, roar, growl, blip, click, whimper, and, of course, snap, crackle, and pop. Note that the

connection between sound and pronunciation is sometimes rather a product of imagination ("slam" and "wring" are not very good imitations). And note also that written language retains an aural quality, so that even unspoken your writing has a sound to it. Compare these sentences, for instance:

- Someone yelled, "Look out!" and I heard the skidding of tires and the horrible noise of bending metal and breaking glass.
- Someone yelled "Look out!" and I heard a loud screech followed by a grinding, wrenching crash.

Onomatopoeia can produce a lively sentence, adding a kind of flavoring by its sound effects:

- No one talks in these factories. Everyone is too busy. The only sounds are the snip, snip of scissors and the hum of sewing machines.
- But I loved that old car. I never heard the incessant rattle on a rough road, or the squeakitysqueak whenever I hit a bump; and as for the squeal of the tires around every corner--well, that was macho.
- The flies buzzing and whizzing around their ears kept them from finishing the experiment at the swamp.
- If you like the plop, plop, plop of a faucet at three in the morning, you will like this record.

APOSTROPHE

This interrupts the discussion or discourse and addresses directly a person or personified thing, either present or absent. Its most common purpose in prose is to give vent to or display intense emotion, which can no longer be held back:

- Value of wisdom that fadeth not away with time, virtue ever flourishing, that cleanseth its possessor from all venom! O heavenly gift of the divine bounty, descending from the Father of lights, that thou mayest exalt the rational soul to the very heavens! Thou art the celestial nourishment of the intellect…
- Books who alone are liberal and free, who give to all who ask of you and enfranchise all who serve you faithfully!
- Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!

Apostrophe does not appear very often in argumentative writing because formal argument is by its nature fairly restrained and intellectual rather than emotional; but under the right circumstances an apostrophe could be useful:

- But all such reasons notwithstanding, dear reader, does not the cost in lives persuade you by itself that we must do something immediately about the situation?

ENTHYMEME

This is an informally-stated syllogism which omits either one of the premises or the conclusion. The omitted part must be clearly understood by the reader. The usual form of this logical shorthand omits the major premise:

- Since your application was submitted before April 10th, it will be considered. [Omitted premise: All applications submitted before April 10 will be considered.]
- He is an American citizen, so he is entitled to due process. [All American citizens are entitled to due process.]

An enthymeme can also be written by omitting the minor premise:

- Sharfaa is allergic to foods containing monosodium glutamate, so she cannot eat Chinese food seasoned with it.

- A political system can be just only when those who make its laws keep well informed about the subject and effect of those laws. This is why our system is in danger of growing unjust.

It is also possible to omit the conclusion to form an enthymeme, when the two premises clearly point to it:

- If, as Anatole France said, "It is human nature to think wisely and act foolishly," then I must propose that the Board of Supervisors in this case is demonstrating human nature perfectly well.
- The Fenton Lumber Company never undertakes a clear-cut until at least eighty percent of the trees are mature, and the 4800-acre stand of pine above Mill Creek will not be that mature for another fifteen years.

Whenever a premise is omitted in an enthymeme (and understood by the reader), it is assumed to be either a truism or an acceptable and non-controversial generalization. But sometimes the omitted premise is one with which the reader would not agree, and the enthymeme then becomes a logical fallacy-an unacceptable enthymeme. What are the omitted premises here, and why are they unacceptable?

- You can tell this tape recorder is a bunch of junk: it's made in Japan.
- He says he believes that Jesus was a great moral teacher, so he must be a Christian.

It goes without saying that you should be careful in your own writing not to use enthymemes dishonestly--that is, not to use clearly controversial assertions for the omitted premises. Aside from its everyday use as logical shorthand, enthymeme finds its greatest use in writing as an instrument for slightly understating yet clearly pointing out some assertion, often in the form of omitted conclusion. By making the reader work out the syllogism for himself, you impress the conclusion upon him, yet in a way gentler than if you spelled it out in so many words:

- It is essential to anchor the dam in genuine solid rock, rather than in sandstone, and the Trapper's Bluff area provides the only solid rock for seven miles on either side of the designated optimum site.
- Yes, it is a beautiful car, but it does not have an automatic hood-ornament washer, and I just will not have a car without one.

CLIMAX

(Gradatio) consists of arranging words, clauses, or sentences in the order of increasing importance, weight, or emphasis. Parallelism usually forms a part of the arrangement, because it offers a sense of continuity, order, and movement-up the ladder of importance. But if you wish to vary the amount of discussion on each point, parallelism is not essential.

- The concerto was applauded at the house of Baron von Schnooty, it was praised highly at court, it was voted best concerto of the year by the Academy, it was considered by Mozart the highlight of his career, and it has become known today as the best concerto in the world.
- At 6:20 a.m. the ground began to heave. Windows rattled; then they broke.

Objects started falling from shelves. Water heaters fell from their pedestals, tearing out plumbing. Outside, the road began to break up. Water mains and gas lines were wrenched apart, causing flooding and the danger of explosion. Office buildings began cracking; soon twenty, thirty, forty stories of concrete were diving at the helpless pedestrians panicking below.

- To have faults is not good, but faults are human. Worse is to have them and not see them. Yet beyond that is to have faults, to see them, and to do nothing about them. But even that seems mild compared to him who knows his faults, and who parades them about and encourages them as though they were virtues.

In addition to arranging sentences or groups of short ideas in climactic order, you generally should also arrange the large sections of ideas in your papers, the points in your arguments, and the examples for your

generalizations climactically; although in these cases, the first item should not be the very least important (because its weakness might alienate the reader). Always begin with a point or proof substantial enough to generate interest, and then continue with ideas of increasing importance. That way your argument gets stronger as it moves along, and every point hits harder than the previous one.

DIACOPE
This is a repetition of a word or phrase after an intervening word or phrase as a method of emphasis:

- We will do it, I tell you; we will do it.
- We give thanks to Thee, O God, we give thanks…

ANTIMETABOLE
This is reversing the order of repeated words or phrases (a loosely chiastic structure, AB-BA) to intensify the final formulation, to present alternatives, or to show contrast:

- All work and no play is as harmful to mental health as all play and no work.
- Ask not what you can do for rhetoric, but what rhetoric can do for you.

ANTIPHRASIS
This is a one-word irony, established by context:

- "Come here, Tiny," he said to the fat man.
- It was a cool 115 degrees in the shade.

EPIZEUXIS
This is a repetition of one word (for emphasis):

- The best way to describe this portion of South America is lush, lush, lush.
- What do you see? Wires, wires, everywhere wires.

APOSIOPESIS
This is all about stopping abruptly and leaving a statement unfinished:

- If they use that section of the desert for bombing practice, the rock hunters will--
- I've got to make the team or I'll--.

ANACOLUTHON
This is all about finishing a sentence with a different grammatical structure from that with which it began:

- And then the deep rumble from the explosion began to shake the very bones of-- no one had ever felt anything like it.
- Be careful with these two devices because improperly used they can--well, I have cautioned you enough.

ENUMERATIO
Detailing parts, causes, effects, or consequences to make a point more forcibly:

- I love her eyes, her hair, her nose, her cheeks, her lips [etc.].
- When the new highway opened, more than just the motels and restaurants prospered. The stores noted a substantial increase in sales, more people began moving to town, a new dairy farm was started, the old Main Street Theater doubled its showings and put up a new building…

ANTANAGOGE
Placing a good point or benefit next to a fault criticism, or problem in order to reduce the impact or significance of the negative point:

- True, he always forgets my birthday, but he buys me presents all year round.
- The new anti-pollution equipment will increase the price of the product slightly, I am aware; but the effluent water from the plant will be actually cleaner than the water coming in.

PARATAXIS
Writing successive independent clauses, with coordinating conjunctions, or no conjunctions:

- We walked to the top of the hill, and we sat down.
- In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
- The Starfish went into dry-dock, it got a barnacle treatment, it went back to work.

In this last example above, note that a string of very short sentences can be connected by commas when the elements are parallel. Longer sentences and unparalleled sentence structures need at least semicolons to connect them.

HYPOTAXIS
Using subordination to show the relationship between clauses or phrases (and hence the opposite of parataxis):

- They asked the question because they were curious.
- If a person observing an unusual or unfamiliar object concludes that it is probably a spaceship from another world, he can readily adduce that the object is reacting to his presence or actions when in reality there is absolutely no cause- effect relationship.
- While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

SENTENTIA
Quoting a maxim or wise saying to apply a general truth to the situation; concluding or summing foregoing material by offering a single, pithy statement of general wisdom:

- But, of course, to understand all is to forgive all.
- As the saying is, art is long and life is short.
- For as Pascal reminds us, "It is not good to have all your wants satisfied."

EXEMPLUM
Citing an example; using an illustrative story, either true or fictitious:

- Let me give you an example. In the early 1920's in Germany, the government let the printing presses turn out endless quantities of paper money, and soon, instead of 50-pfennige postage stamps, denominations up to 50 billion marks were being issued.

Examples can be introduced by the obvious choice of "For example," but there are other possibilities. For quick introductions, such as those attached to a sentence, you might use "such as," or "for instance." Examples placed into separate sentences can be introduced by "A case in point," "An instance," "A typical situation," "A common example," "To illustrate, let's consider the situation," and so forth.

PLEONASM
Using more words than required to express an idea; being redundant. Normally a vice, it is done on purpose on rare occasions for emphasis:

- We heard it with our own ears.
- And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, except Jesus Himself alone.

ASSONANCE
Similar vowel sounds repeated in successive or proximate words containing different consonants:

- A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

- Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

DIRIMENS COPULATIO
Mentioning a balancing or opposing fact to prevent the argument from being one-sided or unqualified:

- This car is extremely sturdy and durable. It's low maintenance; things never go wrong with it. Of course, if you abuse it, it will break.

SYMPLOCE
Combining anaphora and epistrophe, so that one word or phrase is repeated at the beginning and another word or phrase is repeated at the end of successive phrases, clauses, or sentences:

- To think clearly and rationally should be a major goal for man; but to think clearly and rationally is always the greatest difficulty faced by man.

APPOSITIVE
A noun or noun substitute placed next to (in apposition to) another noun to be described or defined by the appositive. Don't think that appositives are for subjects only and that they always follow the subject. The appositive can be placed before or after any noun:

- A notorious annual feast, the picnic was well attended. [Here, the appositive (notorious annual feast) is in front of the subject (the picnic).]
- That evening we were all at the concert, a really elaborate and exciting affair.

[Here the appositive (elaborate and exciting etc.) follows the noun, which is the object of a preposition (concert).] With very short appositives, the commas setting off the second noun from the first are often omitted:

- That afternoon Kathy the pianist met the poet John Baraka.
- Is your friend George going to run for office?

ALLEGORY
An allegory is a symbolism device where the meaning of a greater, often abstract, concept is conveyed with the aid of a more corporeal object or idea being used as an example. Usually a rhetoric device, an allegory suggests a meaning via metaphoric examples. Example: Faith is like a stony uphill climb: a single stumble might send you sprawling but belief and steadfastness will see you to the very top.

ANAGRAM
Anagrams are an extremely popular form of literary device wherein the writer jumbles up parts of the word to create a new word. From the syllables of a phrase to the individual letters of a word, any fraction can be jumbled to create a new form. Anagram is a form of wordplay that allows the writer to infuse mystery and a little interactive fun in the writing so that the reader can decipher the actual word on their own and discover a depth of meaning to the writing. Example: An anagram for "debit card" is "bad credit". As you can see, both phrases use the same letters. By mixing the letters a bit of humor is created.

ANASTROPHE
Anastrophe is a form of literary device wherein the order of the noun and the adjective in the sentence is exchanged. In standard parlance and writing the adjective comes before the noun but when one is employing an anastrophe the noun is followed by the adjective. This reversed order creates a dramatic impact and lends weight to the description offered by the adjective. **Example**: He spoke of times past and future, and dreamt of things to be.

ANECDOTE
The word anecdote, phonetically pronounced /an.ik.doht/, means a short verbal accounting of a funny, amusing, interesting event or incident. The story is usually a reminiscence from the teller's life but at best is a related story of fact, as opposed to a contrived work of fiction.

The origin of the word anecdote comes from the Greek Byzantine period, A.D. 527 to 565 during the reign of emperor Justinian. In his court, Justinian had a historian named Procopius who was a gifted writer who wrote many witty, amusing and somewhat bawdy accounts of court life. Never intending for these stories to become public he entitled his writings as "Anecdota" which was Greek for unpublished and kept secret. After his secret writings did indeed become public and published, the term anecdote became commonly used for similar accounts.

Example: Amusing anecdotes many times find their way into wedding receptions, family reunions and any other gathering of people who know each other well. Teachers and educators often tell classrooms of pupils' anecdotes about famous people. The anecdotes are not always flattering, but are usually revealing of character and invariably amusing. Here is an example of an anecdote about Winston Churchill:

Winston Churchill was very fond of his pet dog Rufus. He ate in the dining room with the family on a special cloth and was treated with utmost respect. When enjoying movies, Rufus had the best seat in the house; on Winston Churchill's lap. While watching "Oliver Twist," Churchill put his hands over Rufus' eyes during the scene where Bill Sikes intends to drown his dog. Churchill is believed to have said to Rufus: "don't look now, dear. I'll tell you about it later."

ANTHROPOMORPHISM

Anthropomorphism can be understood to be the act of lending a human quality, emotion or ambition to a non-human object or being. This act of lending a human element to a non-human subject is often employed in order to endear the latter to the readers or audience and increase the level of relativity between the two while also lending character to the subject. Example: The raging storm brought with it howling winds and fierce lightning as the residents of the village looked up at the angry skies in alarm.

APHORISM

An aphorism is a concise statement that is made in a matter-of-fact tone to state a principle or an opinion that is generally understood to be a universal truth. Aphorisms are often adages, wise sayings and maxims aimed at imparting sense and wisdom. It is to be noted that aphorisms are usually witty and curt and often have an underlying tone of authority to them. Example: Upon seeing the shoddy work done by the employee the boss told him to "either shape up or ship out".

ARCHETYPE

An archetype is a reference to a concept, a person or an object that has served as a prototype of its kind and is the original idea that has come to be used over and over again. Archetypes are literary devices that employ the use of a famous concept, person or object to convey a wealth of meaning. Archetypes are immediately identifiable and even though they run the risk of being overused, they are still the best examples of their kind. Example: Romeo and Juliet are an archetype of eternal love and a star- crossed love story.

AUTHORIAL INTRUSION

Authorial Intrusion is an interesting literary device wherein the author penning the story, poem or prose steps away from the text and speaks out to the reader. Authorial Intrusion establishes a one-to-one relationship between the writer and the reader where the latter is no longer a secondary player or an indirect audience to the progress of the story but is the main subject of the author's attention. Example: In many olden novels, especially in suspense novels, the protagonist would move away from the stream of the story and speak out to the reader. This technique was often used to reveal some crucial elements of the story to the reader even though the protagonist might remain mystified within the story for the time being.

BILDUNGSROMAN
This is a very popular form of storytelling whereby the author bases the plot on the overall growth of the central character throughout the timeline of the story. As the story progresses, the subject undergoes noticeable mental, physical, social, emotional, moral, and often spiritual advancement and strengthening before the readers' eyes. It has often been seen that the protagonist begins with views, aims and dreams that contrast with the other characters in the story and then fights his or her way through to achieve them.

Example: Scarlet O'Hara in 'Gone with the Wind' experiences immense personal growth as she learns the value of friends and hard work under duress, without compromising her own dreams.

CACOPHONY
A cacophony in literature refers to the use of words and phrases that imply strong, harsh sounds within the phrase. These words have jarring and dissonant sounds that create a disturbing, objectionable atmosphere. Example: His fingers rapped and pounded the door, and his foot thumped against the yellowing wood.

CAESURA
This literary device involves creating a fracture of sorts within a sentence where the two separate parts are distinguishable from one another yet intrinsically linked to one another. The purpose of using a caesura is to create a dramatic pause, which has a strong impact. The pause helps to add an emotional, often theatrical touch to the sentence and conveys a depth of sentiment in a short phrase. Example: Mozart- oh how your music makes me soar!

CIRCUMLOCUTION
Circumlocution is a form of writing where the writer uses exaggeratedly long and complex sentences in order to convey a meaning that could have otherwise been conveyed through a shorter, much simpler sentence. Circumlocution involves stating an idea or a view in an indirect manner that leaves the reader guessing and grasping at the actual meaning. Example: Instead of writing "At 8 PM he arrived by car for the dinner party." the author writes, "Around 3 hours after sunset, it was winter at the time, the man arrived in a combustion engine driven piece of technology with four wheels to join other bipedal creatures in the ingestion of somewhat large quantities of food and drink while having discourse around a large wooden mesa designed for such a purpose".

CONFLICT
It is a literary device used for expressing a resistance the protagonist of the story finds in achieving his aims or dreams. The conflict is a discord that can have external aggressors or can even arise from within the self. It can occur when the subject is battling his inner discord, at odds with his surroundings or it may be pitted against others in the story. Example: John tried hard to convince himself that his Hollywood dreams were worth the struggle but his parents, and his inner voice of reason, failed to agree.

CONNOTATION
Connotations are the associations people make with words that go beyond the literal or dictionary definition. Many words have connotations that create emotions or feelings in the reader. Example: And once again, the autumn leaves were falling. This phrase uses 'autumn' to signify something coming to an end.

CONSONANCE
Consonance refers to repetition of sounds in quick succession produced by consonants within a sentence or phrase. The repetitive sound is often found at the end of a word. Consonance is the opposite of assonance, which implies repetitive usage of vowel sounds.
Example: He struck a streak of bad luck.

DEUS EX MACHINA

Deus ex Machina is a rather debatable and often criticized form of literary device. It refers to the incidence where an implausible concept or character is brought into the story in order to make the conflict in the story resolve and to bring about a pleasing solution. The use of Deus ex Machina is not recommended as it is seen to be the mark of a poor plot that the writer needs to resort to random, insupportable and unbelievable twists and turns to reach the end of the story.

Example: If in a suspense novel the protagonist suddenly finds a solution to his dilemmas because of divine intervention.

DICTION

Diction is the distinctive tone or tenor of an author's writings. Diction is not just a writer's choice of words it can include the mood, attitude, dialect and style of writing. Diction is usually judged with reference to the prevailing standards of proper writing and speech and is seen as the mark of quality of the writing. It is also understood as the selection of certain words or phrases that become peculiar to a writer. Example: Certain writers in the modern day and age use archaic terms such as 'thy', 'thee' and 'wherefore' to imbue a Shakespearean mood to their work.

DOPPELGANGER

The term is derived from the German language and literally translates into 'double walker'. It refers to a character in the story that is actually a counterfeit or a copy of a genuine character. Doppelgangers of the main characters usually bear the ability to impersonate the original but have vastly different spirits and intentions. The doppelganger usually has a different appearance but an earthly soul and supernatural hoodwinking abilities that allow it to fool other unsuspecting characters. Example: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

EKPHRASTIC

Ekphrastic refers to a form of writing, mostly poetry, wherein the author describes another work of art, usually visual. It is used to convey the deeper symbolism of the corporeal art form by means of a separate medium. It has often been found that ekphrastic writing is rhetorical in nature and symbolic of a greater meaning. Example: A photograph of an empty landscape can convey desolation, abandon and loss. Similarly, one can convey the same sentiments and concepts by using phrases such as 'an empty doorway' or 'a childless nursery'.

EPILOGUE

Epilogues are an inherent part of any story or poem and are essential to the structure of any written form. The epilogue is an important literary tool that acts as the afterword once the last chapter is over. The purpose of an epilogue is to add a little insight to some interesting developments that happen once the major plot is over. Epilogues often act as a teaser trailer to any possible sequels that might be created later. Sometimes the epilogue is used to add a little bit about the life or future of the main characters after the story itself has unfolded and wrapped up. Epilogues can be written in a number of ways: sometimes the same narrative style as adopted in the story is continued while at other times one of the characters might take up the narrative or speak one to one with the audience.

Example:

In a remarkably contemporary moment at the end of The Tempest, Shakespeare's wizard Prospero addresses the audience directly, breaking down the boundaries of the play. He informs them that the play is over, his powers are gone, and thus his escape from the play's island setting depends on their applause that they, in effect, get to decide his fate. This serves as an Epilogue for Shakespeare's tragic-comedy The Tempest.

EUPHEMISM

The term 'euphemism' is used to refer to the literary practice of using a comparatively milder or less abrasive form of a negative description instead of its original, unsympathetic form. This device is used when writing about matters such as sex, violence, death, crimes and things "embarrassing". The purpose of euphemisms is to substitute unpleasant and severe words with more genteel ones in order to mask the harshness. The use of euphemisms is sometimes manipulated to lend a touch of exaggeration or irony in satirical writing. Example: Using "to put out to pasture" when one implies retiring a person because they are too old to be effective.

MORE EXAMPLES OF EUPHEMISMS:

- **Downsizing** - This is used when a company fires a larger number of employees.
- **Friendly fire** - This is used by the military when soldiers are accidentally killed by other soldiers on the same side.
- **Tipsy** - This is a soft way to say that someone has had too much to drink.
- **Golden years** - This is used to describe the later period of life when someone is of old age.
- **Gone to heaven** - This is a polite way to say that someone is dead.
- **Enhanced interrogation** - This is modern euphemism to minimize what by many people would be viewed as torture.

EUPHONY

The literary device "euphony" refers to the use of phrases and words that are noted for possessing an extensive degree of notable loveliness or melody in the sound they create. The use of euphony is predominant in literary prose and poetry, where poetic devices such as alliterations, rhymes and assonance are used to create pleasant sounds.

Euphony is the opposite of cacophony, which refers to the creation of unpleasant and harsh sounds by using certain words and phrases together. This literary device is based on the use and manipulation of phonetics in literature. Example: It has been said that the phrase "cellar door" is reportedly the most pleasant-sounding phrase in the English language. The phrase is said to depict the highest degree of euphony, and is said to be especially notable when spoken in the British accent.

FLASHBACK

Flashback is a literary device wherein the author depicts the occurrence of specific events to the reader, which have taken place before the present time the narration is following, or events that have happened before the events that are currently unfolding in the story. Flashback devices that are commonly used are past narratives by characters, depictions and references of dreams and memories and a sub device known as authorial sovereignty wherein the author directly chooses to refer to a past occurrence by bringing it up in a straightforward manner. Flashback is used to create a background to the present situation, place or person. **Example**: Back in the day when Sarah was a young girl…

You can see flashbacks used very often in movies. For example, it is common in movies for there to be a flashback that gives the viewer a look into the characters life when they were younger, or when they have done something previously. This is done to help the viewer better understand the present situation.

FORESHADOWING

The literary device foreshadowing refers to the use of indicative word or phrases and hints that set the stage for a story to unfold and give the reader a hint of something that is going to happen without revealing the story or spoiling the suspense. Foreshadowing is used to suggest an upcoming outcome to the story. **Example**: "He had no idea of the disastrous chain of events to follow". In this sentence, while the protagonist is clueless of further developments, the reader learns that something disastrous and problematic is about to happen to/for him.

IMAGERY
In literature, one of the strongest devices is imagery wherein the author uses words and phrases to create "mental images" for the reader. Imagery helps the reader to visualize more realistically the author's writings. The usage of metaphors, allusions, descriptive words and similes amongst other literary forms in order to "tickle" and awaken the readers' sensory perceptions is referred to as imagery.

Imagery is not limited to only visual sensations, but also refers to igniting kinesthetic, olfactory, tactile, gustatory, thermal and auditory sensations as well. Example: The gushing brook stole its way down the lush green mountains, dotted with tiny flowers in a riot of colors and trees coming alive with gaily chirping birds.

INTERNAL RHYME
In literature the internal rhyme is a practice of forming a rhyme in only one lone line of verse. An internal rhyme is also known as the middle rhyme because it is typically constructed in the middle of a line to rhyme with the bit at the end of the same metrical line. Example: The line from the famed poem Ancient Mariner, "We were the first that ever burst".

INVERSION
The term 'inversion' refers to the practice of changing the conventional placement of words. It is a literary practice typical of the older classical poetry genre. In present day literature it is usually used for the purpose of laying emphasis. This literary device is more prevalent in poetry than prose because it helps to arrange the poem in a manner that catches the attention of the reader not only with its content but also with its physical appearance; a result of the peculiar structuring.

Example:
In the much known and read **Paradise Lost**, Milton wrote:
"Of Man's First Disobedience and the Fruit
Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste
Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,
Sing Heavenly Muse. . ."

JUXTAPOSITION
Juxtaposition is a literary device wherein the author places a person, concept, place, idea or theme parallel to another. The purpose of juxtaposing two directly or indirectly related entities close together in literature is to highlight the contrast between the two and compare them. This literary device is usually used for etching out a character in detail, creating suspense or lending a rhetorical effect. Example: In Paradise Lost, Milton has used juxtaposition to draw a parallel between the two protagonists, Satan and God, who he discusses by placing their traits in comparison with one another to highlight their differences.

KENNINGS
The use of Kennings in literature is characteristically related to works in Old English poetry where the author would use a twist of words, figure of speech or magic poetic phrase or a newly created compound sentence or phrase to refer to a person, object, place, action or idea. The use of imagery and indicative, direct and indirect references to substitute the proper, formal name of the subject is known as kennings. The use of kennings was also prevalent in Old Norse and Germanic poetry. Example: Kennings are rare in modern day language. Here are a few examples from Beowulf:

1) Battle-sweat = blood
2) Sky-candle = sun
3) Whale-road = ocean

MALAPROPISM
Malapropism in literature refers to the practice of misusing words by substituting words with similar sounding words that have different, often unconnected meanings, and thus creating a situation of confusion, misunderstanding and amusement. Malapropism is used to convey that the speaker or character is flustered, bothered, unaware or confused and as a result cannot employ proper diction. A trick to using malapropism is to ensure that the two words (the original and the substitute) sound similar enough for the reader to catch onto the intended switch and find humor in the result.

Example: In the play "Much Ado About Nothing", noted playwright William Shakespeare's character Dogberry says, "Our watch, sir, have indeed comprehended two auspicious persons." Instead, what the character means to say is ""Our watch, sir, have indeed apprehended two suspicious persons."

NEGATIVE CAPABILITY
The use of negative capability in literature is a concept promoted by poet John Keats, who was of the opinion that literary achievers, especially poets, should be able to come to terms with the fact that some matters might have to be left unsolved and uncertain. Keats was of the opinion that some certainties were best left open to imagination and that the element of doubt and ambiguity added romanticism and specialty to a concept. Example: The best references of the use of negative capability in literature would be of Keats' own works, especially poems such as Ode on a Grecian Urn and Ode to a Nightingale.

NEMESIS
In literature, the use of a nemesis refers to a situation of poetic justice wherein the positive characters are rewarded and the negative characters are penalized. The word also sometimes refers to the character or medium by which this justice is brought about as Nemesis was the patron goddess of vengeance according to classical mythology. Example: In the popular book series Harry Potter, the protagonist Harry Potter is the nemesis of the evil Lord Voldemort.

PARADOX
A paradox in literature refers to the use of concepts or ideas that are contradictory to one another, yet, when placed together hold significant value on several levels. The uniqueness of paradoxes lies in the fact that a deeper level of meaning and significance is not revealed at first glance, but when it does crystallize, it provides astonishing insight. Example: High walls make not a palace; full coffers make not a king.

PERIPHRASIS
The term 'periphrasis' refers to the use of excessive language and surplus words to convey a meaning that could otherwise be conveyed with fewer words and in more direct a manner. The use of this literary device can be to embellish a sentence, to create a grander effect, to beat around the bush and to draw attention away from the crux of the message being conveyed. Example: Instead of simply saying "I am displeased with your behavior", one can say, "The manner in which you have conducted yourself in my presence of late has caused me to feel uncomfortable and has resulted in my feeling disgruntled and disappointed with you".

SATIRE
The use of satire in literature refers to the practice of making fun of a human weakness or character flaw. The use of satire is often inclusive of a need or decision of correcting or bettering the character that is on the receiving end of the satire. In general, even though satire might be humorous and may "make fun", its purpose is not to entertain and amuse but actually to derive a reaction of contempt from the reader.

Example: An example of satire in modern pop culture is the TV series South Park that uses satire as it primary medium for drawing attention the flaws in society, especially American society at present. The scripts and writing for the show are an excellent example of satire in written form.

SPOONERISM
Spoonerism refers to the practice of interchanging the first letters of some words in order to create new words or even to create nonsensical words in order to create a humorous setting. While they are often unintentional and known as a "slip of the tongue", in literature they are welcomed as witty wordplay. Example: The phrase "flesh and blood" being spoken as a character as "blesh and flood" in urgency and heightened emotion.

SUSPENSE
Suspense is the intense feeling that an audience goes through while waiting for the outcome of certain events. It basically leaves the reader holding their breath and wanting more information. The amount of intensity in a suspenseful moment is why it is hard to put a book down. Without suspense, a reader would lose interest quickly in any story because there is nothing that is making the reader ask, "What's going to happen next?" In writing, there has to be a series of events that leads to a climax that captivates the audience and makes them tense and anxious to know what is going to happen.

SYMBOL
A symbol is a literary device that contains several layers of meaning, often concealed at first sight, and is representative of several other aspects, concepts or traits than those that are visible in the literal translation alone. Symbol is using an object or action that means something more than its literal meaning. Example: The phrase "a new dawn" does not talk only about the actual beginning of a new day but also signifies a new start, a fresh chance to begin and the end of a previous tiring time.

BASIC ELEMENTS OF LITERATURE
The elements of literature are the basic components that are used to create a literary work. These elements are used to enhance the literary experience and to convey the author's message and meaning to the reader. The main elements of literature are:

- **Plot**: The cause-and-effect sequence of events that make up a story. It includes an exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.
- **Character**: The people or animals that are featured in a story. They may be major or minor, and they may be described through their physical appearance, personality, and actions.
- **Setting**: The time (weather, time of the day, time period – **past, present, future**) and place where the story take place It can help establish mood, create atmosphere, and convey important cultural or historical details.
- **Theme**: The central idea or message of a literary work. It often reflects on the human experience and can be expressed through symbols, motifs, and other literary devices.
- **Tone**: The writer's attitude towards the subject matter or audience. It can be conveyed through the use of language, imagery, and other literary devices.
- **Point of view**: The perspective from which the story is told. It can be first-person, third-person, or omniscient.
- **Style**: The way in which the writer uses language to create the literary work. This can include the use of figurative language, syntax, and other aspects of linguistic style.
- **Conflict**: In works of narrative, conflict is the challenge main characters need to solve to achieve their goals. It's a major literary element of narrative or dramatic structure that creates challenges in a story by adding uncertainty to if a goal would be achieved.

FEATURES OF LITERARY ELEMENTS

- **Plot**: The main features of plot include the sequence of events, conflict, and resolution. The plot must have a clear beginning, middle, and end, and it should be believable and engaging for the reader. Conflict is essential to a story's plot. Without conflict, there is no plot. The purpose of conflict is to create tension in the story, making readers more interested by leaving them uncertain which of the characters or forces will prevail. The easier it is for the protagonist to triumph, the

less value there is in the drama.

- **Character**: The main features of character include physical appearance, personality, motivation, and behavior. Characters should be well-developed, and their actions should be consistent with their traits and motivations.
- **Setting**: The main features of setting include time, place, and atmosphere. The setting should be described in enough detail to transport the reader to that time and place, and it should be realistic and appropriate for the story being told.
- **Point of view**: The main feature of point of view is the perspective from which the story is told. The point of view can greatly influence the reader's understanding of the plot, characters, and themes.
- **Style**: The main features of style include diction, syntax, tone, and figurative language. Style can be used to create a specific mood or atmosphere, and it can be used to highlight certain feelings or ideas.
- **Theme**: The main feature of theme is the underlying message or meaning of the story. Themes can be expressed through the plot, characters, and setting and they often reflect the author's personal beliefs or values.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LITERARY ELEMENTS

The elements of literature are interconnected, and their relationships are crucial to creating a coherent and meaningful literary work. Here are some of the relationships between the elements of literature:

- **Plot and character**: The plot and characters are closely related, as the events of the plot are driven by the characters' actions and motivations. The plot often centers on a conflict or problem that the characters must face, and the resolution of the conflict depends on the characters' decisions and actions.
- **Setting and atmosphere**: The setting of a story can greatly affect the mood and atmosphere of the work. The description of the setting can create a sense of time and place, and can also set the tone for the story.
- **Point of view and characterization**: The point of view can have a significant impact on how the characters are portrayed. The choice of point of view can influence the reader's perception of the characters and their motivations.
- **Style and theme**: The author's style of writing can often reflect the themes of the work. The language used to convey the story can help reinforce the underlying message or meaning of the work.

SETTING

Setting is the time, place, and social environment in which a narrative occurs. It provides the contextual framework that shapes characters, plot, and mood.

Types and Subtypes:

1. **Temporal Setting:** The historical period, season, time of day, or epoch. **Example: Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat*** is precisely set in the days leading up to Kenya's independence (*Uhuru*) in 1963, making the historical moment a crucible for personal and political betrayals.
2. **Physical/Geographical Setting:** The concrete, sensory environment (country, landscape, city, building, room). **Example:** The harsh, arid village of **Ilmorog in *Petals of Blood*** symbolizes both the physical and spiritual drought of post-colonial Kenya.
3. **Social Setting:** The cultural, economic, and class milieu of the characters. **Example: Mariama Bâ's *So Long a Letter*** is embedded in the specific social setting of 1970s urban Senegal, exploring the tensions between Islamic tradition, modernity, and women's rights within that societal framework.
4. **Psychological Setting:** An environment that mirrors or influences a character's mental state. **Example:** The oppressive, claustrophobic atmosphere of the **"House of Hunger" in Dambudzo**

Marechera's eponymous work is less a physical place and more a manifestation of colonial alienation and mental anguish.

PLOT

Plot is the sequence of interconnected events and actions that constitute the narrative structure. It is the "what happens" in a story.

Types and Subtypes:

1. **Linear Plot:** Events unfold chronologically from beginning to end. **Example: Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*** largely follows a linear plot, tracing Okonkwo's life from youth to his tragic end.
2. **Non-Linear/Disjointed Plot:** Employs flashbacks (*analepsis*), flash-forwards (*prolepsis*), or fragmentation. **Example: Moses Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles*** uses a swirling, non-linear narrative to mirror the chaotic history of post-colonial Uganda.
3. **Episodic Plot:** A series of loosely connected incidents or adventures, often linked by a central character. **Example: Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*** follows a hero through a sequence of fantastical, episodic encounters in the spirit world.
4. **In Medias Res:** The story begins "in the middle of things," then fills in past events. **Example: Bessie Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather*** opens with the protagonist, Makhaya, fleeing across the border into Botswana, with his traumatic past in South Africa revealed gradually.

THE FREYTAG'S PYRAMID

Freytag's Pyramid is a dramatic structure used in literature and storytelling, named after German playwright and novelist Gustav Freytag. The Pyramid is a way of organizing the **plot** of a story into five basic parts, with each part representing a different stage of the story's development:

- **Exposition**: The introduction of the characters, setting, and basic situation. The reader meets the characters and discovers the setting. Reader interest is aroused here. The conflict that drives the story's action is discovered at the end of the introduction, with the initiating incident.
- **Rising Action**: The part of the story that develops the conflict, complications, and challenges for the main character. Builds up the story (the longest part)— a series of steps that lead to the climax. You get more information about conflict and character here.
- **Climax**: The turning point or highest point of conflict in the story. Here, the reader finds out what happens to the conflict, or how the conflict might be resolved. The story may not yet be finished, but the reader now has a good understanding of what way it is going to go.
- **Falling Action**: The part of the story that shows the consequences of the climax and begins to resolve the conflict. The plot begins to wrap up in this section of the story, which is usually brief.
- **Resolution**: The conclusion of the story where all loose ends are tied up and the story reaches its final outcome. This part follows quickly after the climax and provides the last pieces of information for the reader. "Denouement" is French for "unknotting"; you may therefore think of denouement as the "unknotting" or "untangling" of the plot. Other words for denouement are conclusion or resolution (think about it as the resolution of the climax). However, not all conclusions provide resolution.

There are four types of conclusions and they have a variety of names:

- **Expository Happy**: All loose ends are tied up and explained and the ending is happy.
- **Expository Sad:** All loose ends are tied up and explained and the ending is sad.
- **Surprise or Twist**: Something happens that the reader does not expect at all.
- **Unresolved/Indeterminate/Cliffhanger:** The reader is left with questions and has to, in part, supply the ending him or herself. Some loose ends are left to dangle.

STYLE
Style is the distinctive manner in which a writer uses language—their unique fingerprint expressed through word choice, syntax, and literary devices.

Types and Subtypes:

1. **Ornate/Formal Style:** Characterized by complex syntax, elevated diction, and extensive use of figurative language. **Example: Wole Soyinka's** prose and drama often employ a dense, allusive, and richly metaphorical style, drawing on Yoruba cosmology and Western canon.
2. **Plain/Simple Style:** Uses straightforward vocabulary, clear syntax, and unadorned statements. **Example: Mariama Bâ's** style in *So Long a Letter* is direct, intimate, and epistolary, conveying raw emotion with lucid precision.
3. **Experimental/Avant-Garde Style:** Seeks to break conventional rules of grammar, syntax, and narrative. **Example: Dambudzo Marechera's** stream-of-consciousness, fragmented, and visceral style in *The House of Hunger* rejects traditional narrative forms.
4. **Satirical Style:** Uses irony, exaggeration, and ridicule to critique folly or vice. **Example: Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born*** employs a bitterly satirical style to lambast the corruption of Ghana's post-independence elite.

CONFLICT
Conflict is the central struggle between opposing forces that drives the plot. It is the engine of narrative.

Types and Subtypes:

1. **Internal Conflict (Man vs. Self):** A struggle within a character's own mind (desires, fears, morality). **Example: Efuru in Flora Nwapa's novel** grapples with internal conflict between her desire for personal fulfillment and societal expectations of motherhood and marriage.
2. **Interpersonal Conflict (Man vs. Man):** A struggle between individual characters. **Example:** The relentless conflict between **Okonkwo and his son Nwoye in *Things Fall Apart*** embodies the clash of generational values and responses to colonial intrusion.
3. **Social Conflict (Man vs. Society):** A struggle against social norms, traditions, or institutions. **Example: The protagonist in Meja Mwangi's *Kill Me Quick*** fights for survival against the brutal, indifferent forces of urban poverty and systemic neglect in Nairobi.
4. **Cosmic Conflict (Man vs. Fate/God/Nature):** A struggle against supernatural forces, destiny, or the natural world. **Example:** In **Myths and legends across Africa**, heroes often battle gods or elemental forces. In literature, characters in **Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*** constantly struggle against the capricious will of the spirit world.

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TONE AND MOOD

- **Tone:** The author's or narrator's *attitude* toward the subject matter and the audience. It is conveyed through word choice and style. Example: **Ayi Kwei Armah's** tone in *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* is overwhelmingly **cynical, despairing, and accusatory** toward the political class. **Key Terms for Tone:** *Formal, informal, ironic, sarcastic, solemn, playful, bitter, nostalgic, respectful, contemptuous.*
- **Mood (Atmosphere):** The emotional *feeling* or ambiance that is evoked *in the reader* by the setting and description. The same novel creates a **claustrophobic, oppressive, and nauseating mood** through its focus on decay, filth, and stagnation. **Key Terms for Mood:** *Gloomy, suspenseful, joyful, melancholic, eerie, peaceful, tense, hopeful.*

VOICE
Voice is the distinctive style or perspective of a narrator or author. It encompasses personality, worldview, and the quality that makes the writing unique.

Types and Subtypes:

1. **Authorial Voice:** The distinct personality of the writer evident across their body of work.
2. **Narrative Voice:** The personality of the storyteller (*who speaks*).
    - **First-Person Voice:** Uses "I." Offers intimacy but limits scope. **Example: Tambu in *Nervous Conditions*** gives us her direct, intelligent, and evolving perspective.
    - **Third-Person Limited:** Uses "he/she," but follows one character's thoughts. **Example:** We experience events largely through **Ifemelu's perspective in *Americanah***.
    - **Third-Person Omniscient:** An all-knowing narrator who can enter any character's mind. **Example:** The narrator in **Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*** moves between the minds of Ugwu, Olanna, and Richard.
    - **Unreliable Narrator:** A narrator whose credibility is compromised. **Example:** The traumatized, fragmented narrative voice in **Marechera's *The House of Hunger*** is inherently unreliable, reflecting a shattered psyche.

NARRATION

Narration is the use of a written or spoken commentary to convey a story to an audience. Narration is conveyed by a narrator: a specific person, or unspecified literary voice, developed by the creator of the story to deliver information to the audience, particularly about the plot: the series of events.

Narration is a required element of all written stories (novels, short stories, poems, memoirs, etc.), presenting the story in its entirety. However, narration is merely optional in most other storytelling formats, such as films, plays, television shows, and video games, in which the story can be conveyed through other means, like dialogue between characters or visual action.

The narrative mode encompasses the set of choices through which the creator of the story develops their narrator and narration: Narrative point of view, perspective, or voice: the choice of grammatical person used by the narrator to establish whether or not the narrator and the audience are participants in the story; also, this includes the scope of the information or knowledge that the narrator presents.

NARRATIVE TENSE

The choice of either the past or present grammatical tense to establish either the prior completion or current immediacy of the plot. In narrative past tense, the events of the plot occur before the narrator's present. This is by far the most common tense in which stories are expressed. This could be in the narrator's distant past or their immediate past, which for practical purposes is the same as their present. Past tense can be used regardless of whether the setting is in the reader's past, present, or future.

In narratives using present tense, the events of the plot are depicted as occurring in the narrator's current moment of time. A recent example of novels narrated in the present tense are those of the Hunger Games trilogy by Suzanne Collins. Present tense can also be used to narrate events in the reader's past. This is known as "historical present". This tense is more common in spontaneous conversational narratives than in written literature, though it is sometimes used in literature to give a sense of immediacy of the actions.

The future tense is the rarest, portraying the events of the plot as occurring sometime after the narrator's present. Often, these upcoming events are described such that the narrator has foreknowledge (or supposed foreknowledge) of their future, so many future-tense stories have a prophetic tone. An example being Story of Your Life by Ted Chiang.

NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE AND TECHNIQUES

- **Narrative Perspective:** Narrative perspective is the position and character of the storyteller, in relation to the narrative itself.
- **Narrative Technique:** Any of the various other methods chosen to help narrate a story, such as establishing the story's setting (location in time and space), developing characters, exploring themes (main ideas or topics), structuring the plot, intentionally expressing certain details but not others, following or subverting genre norms, and using various other storytelling devices and linguistic styles. Thus, narration includes both who tells the story and how the story is told (for example, by using stream of consciousness or unreliable narration). The narrator may be anonymous and unspecified, or a character appearing and participating within their own story (whether fictitious or factual), or the author themself as a character. The narrator may merely relate the story to the audience without being involved in the plot and may have varied awareness of characters' thoughts and distant events. Some stories have multiple narrators to illustrate the storylines of various characters at various times, creating a story with a complex perspective.

TECHNIQUES:

- **Stream-Of-Consciousness:** Stream of consciousness gives the (typically first-person) narrator's perspective by attempting to replicate the thought processes—as opposed to simply the actions and spoken words—of the narrative character. Often, interior monologues and inner desires or motivations, as well as pieces of incomplete thoughts, are expressed to the audience but not necessarily to other characters. Examples include the multiple narrators' feelings in William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying, and the character Offred's often fragmented thoughts in Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale. Irish writer James Joyce exemplifies this style in his novel Ulysses.
- **Unreliable Narrator:** Unreliable narration involves the use of an untrustworthy narrator. This mode may be employed to give the audience a deliberate sense of disbelief in the story or a level of suspicion or mystery as to what information is meant to be true and what is meant to be false. Unreliable narrators are usually first-person narrators; however, a third-person narrator may be unreliable. An example is J.D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye, in which the novel's narrator Holden Caulfield is biased, emotional, and juvenile, divulging or withholding certain information deliberately and at times probably quite unreliable.
- **Dream Sequence:** A dream sequence is a technique used in storytelling, particularly in television and film, to set apart a brief interlude from the main story. The interlude may consist of a flashback, a flashforward, a fantasy, a vision, a dream, or some other element.
- **Epistolary Form:** This is a series of letters, diary entries or other forms of correspondence that tell the story. Example: "The Color Purple" by Alice Walker.
- **Framing Device:** This involves a narrator who introduces or establishes the context of the story, set as a story within a story. Example: "Frankenstein" by Mary Shelley.

NARRATIVE POINT OF VIEW (POV)

First-Person POV

A first-person point of view reveals the story through an openly self-referential and participating narrator. First person creates a close relationship between the narrator and reader, by referring to the viewpoint character with first person pronouns like I and me (as well as we and us, whenever the narrator is part of a larger group). That is, the narrator openly acknowledges their own existence.

Frequently, the first-person narrator is the protagonist, whose inner thoughts are expressed to the audience, even if not to any of the other characters. A first-person narrator with a limited perspective is not able to witness or understand all facets of any situation. Thus, a narrator with this perspective will not be able to report the circumstances fully and will leave the reader with a subjective record of the plot details.

Additionally, this narrator's character could be pursuing a hidden agenda or may be struggling with mental or physical challenges that further hamper their ability to tell the reader the whole, accurate truth of events. This form includes temporary first-person narration as a story within a story, wherein a narrator or character observing the telling of a story by another is reproduced in full, temporarily and without interruption shifting narration to the speaker. The first-person narrator can also be the focal character. The viewpoint character is not necessarily the focal character.

Second-Person POV

The second-person point of view is a point of view where the audience is made a character. This is done with the use of second-person pronouns like you. The narrator could be literally addressing the audience, but more often the second-person referent of these stories is actually some character within the story. Novels in second person are comparatively rare; rather, this point of view tends to be mostly confined to songs and poems.

Third-Person POV

In the third-person narrative mode, the narration refers to all characters with third person pronouns like he, she, or they, and never first- or second-person pronouns. This makes clear the narration is done without the need for a narrator who is identified and personified as a character within the story. For the purpose of comparison to stories that have a narrator, third-person narration is described as having an anonymous narrator. Traditionally, third-person narration is the most commonly used narrative mode in literature. It does not require that the narrator's existence be explained or developed as a particular character, as would be the case with a first-person narrator. It thus allows a story to be told without detailing any information about the teller (narrator) of the story. Instead, a third-person narrator is often simply some disembodied commentary, rather than a fully developed character. Sometimes, third-person narration is called the "he/she" perspective, and, on even rarer occasions, author/omniscient point of view.

The third-person modes are usually categorized along two axes. The first is the subjectivity/objectivity axis, with third person subjective narration involving one or more characters' personal feelings and thoughts, and third person objective narration not describing the feelings or thoughts of any characters but, rather, just the exact facts of the story. Third-person modes may also be categorized along the omniscient/limited axis. A third person omniscient narrator conveys information from multiple characters, places, and events of the story, including any given character's thoughts, and a third person limited narrator conveys the knowledge and subjective experience of just one character. Third person narration, in both its limited and omniscient variants, became the most popular narrative perspective during the 20th century.

Omniscient Or Limited POV

Omniscient point of view is presented by a narrator with an overarching perspective, seeing and knowing everything that happens within the world of the story, including what each of the characters is thinking and feeling. This narrative point of view has been the most commonly used in narrative writing; it is seen in countless classic novels, including works by Charles Dickens, Leo Tolstoy, and George Eliot. It sometimes even takes a subjective approach. One advantage of narrative omniscience is that it enhances the sense of objective reliability (that is, apparent truthfulness) of the plot, which may be important with more complex narratives.

The third-person omniscient narrator is the least capable of being unreliable—although the character of omniscient narrator can have its own personality, offering judgments and opinions on the behavior of the story characters. Limited third-person point of view is used by an anonymous narrator who follows one character's perspective. This is the most common narrative point of view in literature since the early 20th century. Examples include the Harry Potter books and J.M. Coetzee's Disgrace.

Subjective Or Objective POV

Subjective point of view is when the narrator conveys the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of one or more characters. If this is just one character, it can be termed third-person limited, in which the reader is limited to the thoughts of some particular character (often the protagonist) as in the first-person mode, except still giving personal descriptions using third-person pronouns. This is almost always the main character (for example, Gabriel in James Joyce's "The Dead", Nathaniel Hawthorne's Young Goodman Brown, or Santiago in Hemingway's The Old Man and the Sea). Certain third-person omniscient modes are also classifiable as using the third person, subjective mode when they switch between the thoughts and feelings of all the characters.

In contrast to the broad, sweeping perspectives seen in many 19th-century novels, third-person subjective is sometimes called the "over the shoulder" perspective; the narrator only describes events perceived and information known by a character. At its narrowest and most subjective scope, the story reads as though the viewpoint character were narrating it; dramatically this is very similar to the first person, in that it allows in-depth revelation of the protagonist's personality, but it uses third-person grammar. Some writers will shift perspective from one viewpoint character to another, such as in Robert Jordan's **The Wheel of Time**, or George R. R. Martin's **A Song of Ice and Fire**. Free indirect speech is the presentation of a character's thoughts in the voice of the third-person narrator.

Objective point of view employs a narrator who tells a story without describing any character's thoughts, opinions, or feelings; instead, it gives an objective, unbiased point of view. Often the narrator is self-dehumanized in order to make the narrative more neutral. This type of narrative mode is often seen outside of fiction in newspaper articles, biographical documents, and scientific journals. This narrative mode can be described as a "fly-on-the-wall" or "camera lens" approach that can only record the observable actions but does not interpret these actions or relay what thoughts are going through the minds of the characters.

Works of fiction that use this style emphasize characters acting out their feelings observably. Internal thoughts, if expressed, are given through an aside or soliloquy. While this approach does not allow the author to reveal the unexpressed thoughts and feelings of the characters, it does allow the author to reveal information that not all or any of the characters may be aware of. An example of this so-called camera-eye perspective is "Hills Like White Elephants" by Ernest Hemingway. This narrative mode is also called third-person dramatic because the narrator, like the audience of a drama, is neutral and ineffective toward the progression of the plot—merely an uninvolved onlooker.

Alternating Person POV

While the tendency for novels (or other narrative works) is to adopt a single point of view throughout the entire novel, some authors have utilized other points of view that, for example, alternate between different first-person narrators or alternate between a first- and a third-person narrative mode. The ten books of the Pendragon adventure series, by D. J. MacHale, switch back and forth between a first-person perspective (handwritten journal entries) of the main character along his journey as well as a disembodied third-person perspective focused on his friends back home.

Margaret Atwood's Alias Grace provides one character's viewpoint from first-person as well as another character from third-person limited. Often, a narrator using the first person will try to be more objective by also employing the third person for important action scenes, especially those in which they are not directly involved or in scenes where they are not present to have viewed the events in firsthand. This mode is found in Barbara Kingsolver's **The Poisonwood Bible**. In William Faulkner's "**As I Lay Dying"**, even the perspective of a deceased person is included.

TYPES OF HEROES IN A NARRATIVE

There are many types of heroes in literature, each with their own characteristics and qualities that make them unique. Here are some of the most common types:

- **Epic Hero**: An epic hero is a larger-than-life figure who embodies the values of their culture. They undertake perilous journeys, battle mythical creatures or enemies, and often have god-like qualities.
- **Tragic Hero**: A tragic hero is a character who possesses great potential, but is ultimately brought down by a flaw in their character or their tragic circumstances.
- **Anti-Hero**: An anti-hero is a protagonist who lacks traditional heroic qualities such as bravery or honesty, but still accomplishes heroic deeds through their wit or cunning.
- **Byronic Hero**: A Byronic hero is a complex and brooding figure who often attracts others with their charisma, but is also deeply flawed and tormented by their past.
- **Romantic Hero**: A romantic hero is a passionate and emotional figure who often acts on their impulses, and is strongly driven by their desires and emotions.
- **Hermit Hero**: A hermit hero is a character who rejects society and prefers a life of solitude, often because they have been disillusioned by society or have suffered great loss.
- **Tragicomic Hero**: A tragicomic hero is a character that combines elements of tragedy and comedy in their actions and circumstances. They may be funny and charming, but also have tragic flaws or experiences.
- **The Classic Hero**: A brave and virtuous protagonist who embodies the ideal qualities of a hero.
- **The Superhero**: A hero with extraordinary powers or abilities, who uses them to fight crime and protect the innocent.
- **The Reluctant Hero**: A protagonist who is forced into a heroic role and initially does not want to act.
- **The Everyday Hero**: An ordinary person who performs heroic actions or shows exceptional courage in the face of adversity.
- **The Warrior Hero**: A hero who excels in physical combat and martial skills.
- **The Intellectual Hero**: A hero who uses intelligence, wit, or strategic planning to overcome obstacles.
- **The Comedic Hero**: A hero who adds humor and levity to a story, often through their follies and mistakes.
- **The Mentor Hero**; A wise and experienced mentor who guides and trains a younger hero or protagonist.

TYPES OF CHARACTERS

In fictional literature, authors use many different types of characters (major or minor) to tell their stories. Different types of characters fulfill different roles in the narrative process, and with a little bit of analysis, you can usually detect some or all of the types below:

- **Protagonist:** The protagonist is the main character of the story, and usually the hero or heroine. The plot revolves around the protagonist, and their actions and decisions push the story forward. The protagonist is the central person in a story, and is often referred to as the story's main character. He or she (or they) is faced with a conflict that must be resolved. The protagonist may not always be admirable (e.g. an anti-hero); nevertheless s/he must command involvement on the part of the reader, or better yet, empathy.
- **Antagonist:** The antagonist is the character who opposes the protagonist and creates conflict or obstacles for them to overcome. The antagonist can be a person, group, or force of nature. The antagonist is the character(s) (or situation) that represents the opposition against which the protagonist must contend. In other words, the antagonist is an obstacle that the protagonist must overcome.
- **Supporting characters:** Supporting characters are secondary characters who play a supporting

role in the story. They can be friends, family members, or acquaintances who provide help or advice to the protagonist.

- **Foil character:** A foil is a character who is used to contrast with the main character, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses. The foil character serves to highlight the unique qualities of the protagonist. A foil is any character (usually the antagonist or an important supporting character) whose personal qualities contrast with another character (usually the protagonist). By providing this contrast, we get to know more about the other character.
- **Flat character:** A flat character is a character who lacks depth or complexity. They are often one-dimensional and do not change or grow throughout the story. A flat character is the opposite of a round character. This literary personality is notable for one kind of personality trait or characteristic.
- **Round character:** A round character is a character who is fully developed and has many different traits, strengths, and weaknesses. They are complex and change or grow throughout the story. A rounded character is anyone who has a complex personality; he or she is often portrayed as a conflicted and contradictory person.
- **Dynamic character:** A dynamic character is a character who changes or grows significantly throughout the story. They experience a significant transformation or gain newfound insight that affects their actions and behavior. A dynamic character is a person who changes over time, usually as a result of resolving a central conflict or facing a major crisis. Most dynamic characters tend to be central rather than peripheral characters, because resolving the conflict is the major role of central characters.
- **Static character:** A static character is a character who remains fundamentally the same throughout the story. A static character is someone who does not change over time; his or her personality does not transform or evolve.
- **Stock character:** A character who embodies a set of stereotypical traits or qualities and is recognizable as a common character type. Stock characters are those types of characters who have become conventional or stereotypical through repeated use in particular types of stories. Stock characters are instantly recognizable to readers or audience members (e.g. the femme fatale, the cynical but moral private eye, the mad scientist, the geeky boy with glasses, and the faithful sidekick). Stock characters are normally one-dimensional flat characters, but sometimes stock personalities are deeply conflicted, rounded characters (e.g. the "**Hamlet**" type).
- **Symbolic character:** A character who represents something larger than themselves, often a universal concept or theme. A symbolic character is any major or minor character whose very existence represents some major idea or aspect of society. For example, in **Lord of the Flies**, **Piggy** is a symbol of both the rationality and physical weakness of modern civilization; **Jack**, on the other hand, symbolizes the violent tendencies (the **Id**) that William Golding believes is within human nature.
- **Anti-hero:** A major character, usually the protagonist, who lacks conventional nobility of mind, and who struggles for values not deemed universally admirable. Duddy, in Mordecai Richler's **The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz**, is a classic anti-hero. He's vulgar, manipulative and self-centered. Nevertheless, Duddy is the center of the story, and we are drawn to the challenges he must overcome and the goals he seeks to achieve.

Types of Characterization:

- **Direct characterization:** This refers to what the speaker or narrator directly says or thinks about a character. In other words, in a direct characterization, the reader is told what the character is like. When Dickens describes Scrooge like this: "I present him to you: Ebenezer Scrooge the most tightfisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner!" - this is very direct characterization!

- **Indirect characterization:** This refers to what the character says or does. The reader then infers

what the character is all about. This mimics how we understand people in the real world, since we can't "get inside their heads". In other words, in an indirect characterization, it's the reader who is obliged to figure out what the character is like. And sometimes the reader will get it wrong.

How a character can be revealed:
-By psychological description.
-By physical description.
-By probing what s/he thinks.
-By what s/he says.
-By how s/he says it.
-By what s/he does.
-By what others say about him or her.
-By his or her environment.
-By her reaction to others.
-By his reaction to himself.

Remember
Literary characters may embody more than one of these character types at the same time. A dynamic character may also be the antagonist, and a protagonist can also be, say, a flat and stock character (i.e. the one-dimensional hero).

THEMES, MOTIFS, ISSUES, IDEAS
Themes, motifs, issues, and ideas are all important literary elements that contribute to the meaning and significance of literary works. While some of their characteristics may overlap, here are some unique features that distinguish each element:

- **Themes**: Themes are overarching ideas or concepts that are explored throughout a literary work. They are usually abstract in nature, and they can be expressed as a single word or phrase. Themes are often universal and can be applied to society or the human condition. They are often the main idea that the writer wants to communicate through the work.
- **Motifs**: Motifs are recurring elements or patterns of imagery, symbolism, or other literary devices that help to develop a theme or idea. They are often smaller and more specific than themes, but they can help to reinforce or emphasize a particular aspect of the story. Motifs can be used to create a sense of unity or coherence throughout the work, and they can help to build tension or suspense.
- **Issues**: Issues are topics or subjects that are explored in literary works as they relate to society, politics, culture, or other real-world concerns. They are often broader than themes and can encompass several themes. Issues are often used to highlight social commentary and critique larger societal problems. Issues can be controversial and may evoke strong emotions in the reader.
- **Ideas**: Ideas are abstract concepts that inform the work and are often explored through the characters, plot, or dialogue. They are often intellectual, philosophical, or ideological in nature, and they may relate to morality, religion, spirituality, or metaphysics. Ideas can help to provide a deeper insight into the human condition and can provoke thought and reflection in the reader. They often transcend time and place, and can remain relevant and significant even in different cultural or historical contexts.

ORAL LITERATURE

What Is Oral Literature?
Oral literature refers to forms of artistic expression that are transmitted orally from one generation to another, rather than through written texts. It can include various forms such as folktales, myths, legends, proverbs, riddles, songs, and chants. Oral literature is often closely tied to the cultural heritage, history, and beliefs of a community or society, and serves as a means of preserving and transmitting that heritage from one generation to the next. It can also provide insights into the social, political, and religious values of a community, and can serve to foster a sense of cultural identity and belonging.

Sometimes in literature, the term 'folklore' is used instead of 'oral literature' because the former has more and inclusive meaning than the latter one. **Folklore**, by definition, refers to the collection of traditional stories, customs, beliefs and culture of a particular area or country. It is any of the beliefs, customs, and traditions that people pass on from one generation to the next.

What Is Oral Tradition?
This refers to the cultural material transmitted orally from one generation to another. The term suits oral literature far much better than the oxymoron itself.

What Is Oral History?
This refers to the collection and study of historical information about individuals, families, important events, or everyday life using audiotapes, videotapes, or transcriptions of planned interviews.

Features of Oral Literature

- **Oral tradition**: Oral literature is passed down through spoken word and has generally been transmitted from generation to generation.
- **Performance-based**: Oral literature is usually performed in front of an audience rather than written down to be read silently. The performer often uses vocal inflection, gestures, and other body language to convey the meaning of the story.
- **Memorization**: Oral literature is often memorized by performers and listeners alike, leading to variations in the retellings of the same story over time.
- **Repetition and formulaic language**: Many oral stories use repetition and formulaic language as a way of memorization and to create a sense of familiarity.
- **Themes and motifs**: Oral literature often features recurring themes and motifs, such as trickster figures, creation myths, or heroic journeys.
- **Community-centric**: Oral literature often reflects the values and beliefs of the community from which it originated and is used to reinforce cultural traditions, rituals, and practices.
- **Interactive**: Oral literature is often interactive, with the storyteller and audience engaging in call-and-response, songs, and other forms of participatory storytelling.
- **Adaptation**: Oral literature is often adapted to suit the specific circumstances of the performance or audience, leading to variations in the story over time.
- **Cultural identity**: Oral literature is a way of expressing and preserving cultural identity and can serve as a powerful tool for resistance and social change.
- **Universality**: Despite the cultural specificity of oral literature, many stories and motifs are universal and can be found across different cultures and regions.

FORMS OF ORAL LITERATURE
The following are the forms of oral literature.

FOLKTALES
These are the traditional stories about animals or human beings that are usually passed down from one generation to another in a particular society. Most of these tales are not set in any particular time or place, and they begin and end in a certain way. For example, many English and Swahili folktales begin with the phrase 'once upon a time' and end with 'they lived happily ever after'. The story of 'Cinderella' is one of the examples of folktales.

FABLES
Fables are animal stories that try to teach people how to behave. They are a particular type of narrative in which animals, plants, or similar characters are anthropomorphized or made to seem as if they were human. The word 'fable' comes from Latin word 'fabula' which means 'a story or narration' or 'telling'. Fables are sometimes called 'beast stories' because they involve beasts or animals. Fables often deliver a moral lesson which may or may not be explicitly stated at the end. The best-known collection of fables is 'Aesop's Fables' although it is uncertain whether a historical Aesop ever existed. Examples of fables include: The Hare and the Tortoise, The Lion and the Mouse etc.

FAIRY TALES
Fairy tales are the fictional stories that usually involve magic and mythical creatures such as witches and fairies which possess supernatural powers. Fairy itself is an imaginary creature. They have magic powers to perform good and bad deeds. Fairy tales are set in imaginary land, long time ago and far away. They also contain imaginary creatures like elves, goblins, and trolls. They also feature fantastical elements and they have 'a happily ever after' ending. Nowadays, most fairy tales have been adapted into animated stories. The famous examples of fairy tales are 'Cinderella', 'Snow White', 'The Seven Dwarves', and 'Sleeping Beauty'. Fairy tales are meant to entertain.

TRICKSTER TALES
Trickster tales are folktales in which a trickster is a hero. Most tricksters are animals who act like human being by playing tricks to other animals and human beings as well. Trickster tales are ones of the most popular folktales because they are found in every culture. Every culture or society has its own trickster hero or character. In Africa, tricksters include tortoise, the hare, and Anansi the Spider. In East Africa, the hare (Kalulu in Kiswahili) is the most famous trickster hero. The book "Kalulu the Hare" by Frank Worthington, has a lot of wonderful stories about the clever and cunning hare.

PARABLES
Parables are religious stories that teach a basic truth, a moral lesson or a religious principle. The parables usually involve ordinary people who are faced with a moral dilemma, or who most make a moral decision and then deal with the effects of that decision. Many folktales from all cultures fall into the category of parables.

The word 'parable' comes from the Greek word 'parabole' that means 'comparison'. Fables and parables both use comparison, but in fable the audience identifies with a talking frog and in the parable, the Prodigal son. Fables teach moral lesson and ethical lessons, parables include those sorts of lessons, but also deal with larger spiritual truths; parables having both a religious and spiritual aspect.

There are secular parables such as 'Boy Who Cried Wolf' and 'The Man and His Two Wives' and Religious parables like 'The Rich and Lazarus', 'The Good Samaritan' and 'The Mustard Seed' which are commonly referred to as 'The Parables of Jesus'. Most of Aesop's fables also fall into the category of parables because they are also actually parables.

LEGENDS

Legends are old and well-known stories that tell about brave people, adventures, or magical events. Legends are told from one generation to another as though they were true. They are set in a real world and in relatively recent times. Many legends talk about how human beings meet supernatural creatures such as fairies, ghosts, vampires, and witches. They are also associated with the famous people who have died. In American folklore, John Henry was a black hero of many legends in the south. There is one ballad that describes how he competed to dig against a steam drill.

Other American legends include Paul Bunyan who as a child, he could clap hands and break the windows in his house. Paul Bunyan was also able to divert rivers, tame massive long jams, and create wonders such as the Grand Canyon. Another American legend is Davy Crockett who is said that he was the frontiersman and he killed his first bear when he was just 3 years old.

MYTHS

Myths are the religious stories that explain how the world and humanity developed into the present form. Many myths describe the creation of the Earth and they are different from other types of folk stories because they are considered to be true among the people who develop them. Myth itself by definition is an idea or story that many people believe, but which is not true. In some of these stories, a god creates the earth. In others, the earth emerges from a flood. A number of myths describe the creation of the human race and the origin of death. Anansi. Perhaps the most well-known and significant African myth about a spider is the tale of Anansi. This myth dates back to thousands of years, and has many variations. The most common variation on the myth says that Anansi tied each of his eight legs to webs so that he could stay near several different pots of food. He almost breaks into pieces from the web pulling, but the ultimate result is that his legs and all spiders' legs are extremely like this. This both explains the thinness of spiders' legs, and teaches the moral of not being greedy.

ANECDOTE

An anecdote is a short written or oral account of an event in a real person's life. Anecdotes are always short, amusing and interesting stories about real incidents or people. Anecdote is used to illustrate a point. The word 'anecdote' is a Greek word which means 'unpublished' or 'not given out', meaning also those anecdotes are short stories that are told but that are not always published or given out. For example, a parable from the Bible, like The Good Samaritan, could be called an anecdote because it is presented and based on a real incident involving actual persons, whether famous or not but usually in an identifiable place. Like parables, anecdotes are often used by philosophers and teachers of schools and religions to point out truths about real life. For instance, in the daily life, you may tell others about yourself but you can give them an anecdote when you were suddenly caught by your mother stealing a piece of bread.

EPICS

Epics are long narrative poems that recount the exploits of a larger-than-life hero. Also, epics may be books, poems, or films that tell a long story about brave actions and exciting events. The epic hero is usually a man of high social status and who have a great historical and legendary importance. Epics often involve supernatural events, long time journeys, distant journeys, and life and death struggle between good and evil. The most common epics are 'Beowulf', 'Odyssey', 'Iliad', 'Moses' and 'Sundiata' (An African epic about an Old Mali Empire).

TALL TALE

A tall tale is a folktale about a larger-than-life hero who solve an over-the-top problem in a humorous or outrageous way. Tall tales typically feature highly exaggerated, improbable details and were created by several cultures, including the ancient Greeks, Romans and Celts. Many American cowboys, lumberjacks, railroad workers, and steel workers created superhuman versions of themselves that shared their

experiences about how they overcame obstacles. American folk heroes like Paul Bunyan, Davy Crockett, Pecos Bill, and John Henry are also regarded as tall tale heroes.

BALLADS

A ballad is a short story in the form of a poem or song in which there are two or more people speaking in turn. It is a dramatic type of poem as it is presented like drama. Like other folktales, ballads also were passed down by the word of mouth for generations before being written down. The purpose of a ballad is to tell a story, so all elements of a story are included, that is plot, characters, narrator, dialogue, setting, drama, and so on. Features of ballad are so varied. Ballads are type of closed-form poetry. Hence, they have a specific set of characteristics and most importantly they tell stories. They often include a refrain and they are very rhythmical and use simple, everyday language to tell the story.

They are also made up of stanzas of four lines, with the second and fourth lines rhyming. The rhythm of ballads is based on the first and third lines having four stresses and the second and fourth lines having three stresses. Like songs, ballads also repeat important phrases throughout. Simple, but strong language is used in ballads and because of the story-like nature of ballads, dialogue is often included. The examples of ballads include, 'Ballad of the Landlord" by Langston Hughes and "Ballad of John Henry".

RIDDLES

A riddle is a question that is deliberately very confusing and has a humorous or clever answer. Mostly, riddles are the questions or statements testing ingenuity in divining its answer or meaning. Every culture has riddles, which were passed down orally from one generation to the next. There is on famous riddle in the Greek tragic play, 'Oedipus the King' where the Sphinx asks King Oedipus; "What has one voice and becomes four-footed, two-footed, and three-footed?" Oedipus answers by saying, "Man, who crawls on all fours as a baby, then walks on the two legs, and finally needs a cane in old age". They are the puzzling questions, statements; especially ones intended to test the cleverness of those wishing to solve them. A successful riddle often fancifully describes an inanimate object as if it were a living thing.

SAYINGS

A saying is a well-known short statement that expresses an idea that most people believe is true and wise. Saying are also folk statements that are handed down from one generation to another. Sayings include proverbs and idioms. According to Wolfgang Mieder, author of the book "Proverbs Are Never Out of Season", the definition of a Proverb is a phrase which contains above all wisdom, truth, morals, experience, lessons, and advice concerning life and which has been handed down from generation to generation. Proverbs are also defined as short well-known sayings that state a general truth or give advice and they can be orally transmitted or put in written forms. A proverb can help you perfect your conversational English skills and deepen your understanding, as proverbs often come up in conversation. You may also keep the record of proverbs you read somewhere or hear someone speak.

IDIOMS

An idiom is defined as a group of words that has a special meaning that is different from the ordinary meaning of each separate word. It is also defined as a phrase or sentence that is not clear from the meaning of its individual words and which must be learnt by heart as a whole unit. Therefore, the meaning of a whole unit of idiom is not clear, that is, its expression has a meaning other than its literal meaning.

OTHER FORMS

There are also other forms of oral traditions. These include customs and beliefs, superstitions and witchcraft, folk songs and dances, folk heroes, as well as folk holidays and jokes (amusing stories).

- **Dirges**: Dirges are mournful songs or musical compositions that are typically performed at funerals or other solemn occasions. They are meant to express grief and sorrow or honor the

memory of the deceased.

- **Incantations**: Incantations are spoken or sung formulas or spells that are believed to have magical power. They are often used in religious or spiritual contexts or in traditional healing practices.
- **Rituals**: Rituals are formalized actions or ceremonies that are performed for a specific purpose, often related to religion or spirituality. They may involve specific movements, symbols, or gestures and are often used to mark significant events or transitions.
- **Rites Of Passage**: Rites of passage are rituals or ceremonies that mark a person's transition from one stage of life to another. Examples include baptism, graduation, marriage, or funeral rites.
- **Oaths**: Oaths are solemn promises or commitments made by an individual to uphold certain principles, values, or duties. They may be used in legal, religious, or other contexts.
- **Swearing**: Swearing refers to the use of profanity or vulgar language to express anger, frustration, or emphasis. It may be used in casual conversation or in more formal contexts like literature or drama.
- **Chants**: Chants are repetitive songs or phrases that are often used in religious or spiritual contexts or in traditional healing practices. They may be sung or spoken and are often used to create a meditative or trance-like state.
- **Anthems**: Anthems are patriotic or celebratory songs that are often associated with a particular country, organization, or cause. They are meant to inspire and unite people under a common banner.
- **Lamentations**: Lamentations are sorrowful songs or cries of grief or mourning. They may be performed individually or as a group and are often used to express feelings of loss or sadness.
- **Choruses**: Choruses are groups of singers or performers who sing or speak in unison. They may be used in musical compositions or as a means of emphasizing a particular message or idea. On the other hand, a chorus is a repeated part of a song; a refrain.

TYPES OF SONGS COMMONLY FOUND IN ORAL LITERATURE

Song is a form of musical expression that is often accompanied by lyrics and performed by a single person or group of singers. It is one of the oldest forms of oral literature and has been used to express emotions, tell stories, convey cultural values, and celebrate or commemorate important events. Here are some of the types of songs commonly found in oral literature:

- **Ballads**: These are narrative songs that tell a story, often focused on themes of love, tragedy, or adventure. Ballads are typically performed in a slow, melancholy style and may be accompanied by a simple musical instrument.
- **Work Songs**: These songs are typically sung by groups of people as they work, often used to coordinate their movements and rhythm. Examples of work songs include sea shanties, field hollers, and chain gang songs.
- **Spirituals**: These are religious songs that originated in African-American communities and often include call-and-response patterns and lyrics that express hope, faith, and liberation.
- **Lullabies**: These are soothing songs that are sung to comfort infants and children and help them fall asleep.
- **Patriotic Songs**: These are songs that celebrate a country, its people, or its values. They are often used to inspire national pride or unity and may be sung on holidays or at public events.
- **Protest Songs**: These are songs that address political or social issues and express dissent or criticism of the status quo. They are often associated with movements for social justice or change.
- **Love Songs**: These are songs that express romantic or strong feelings and are often used to celebrate or lament love and relationships.
- **Hymns**: These are religious songs that are used in worship services or other religious rituals. They are often sung by a choir or congregation and may include traditional or contemporary music.

- **Nursery Rhymes**: These are short, simple songs that are often used to teach children basic concepts such as counting, colors, or rhyming words.
- **Epic Songs**: These are long, narrative songs that tell stories of heroic deeds or important events in a culture's history. They are often used to celebrate or commemorate important figures or events and may be accompanied by dance or other visual elements.

THE TAXONOMY OF ORAL SONGS

Oral songs are **functional poetry**, categorized by their role in the human and communal lifecycle. Each type demonstrates specific poetic features tailored to its social purpose.

1. **Cradle Songs / Lullabies:** These are the first poems a human hears. Their primary function is somatic—to soothe and induce sleep—achieved through a gentle, rocking rhythm, simple repetitive structures, and soft, vowel-rich sounds. Their lyrical content often blends tenderness with subtle cultural instruction or expressions of parental hope/fear. *Example:* An Igbo lullaby might hum, "*Omu mara o, nwa m, laa n'ụra*" (The tender palm frond sways, my child, go to sleep), using natural imagery to create a peaceful, hypnotic mood. The poetic device is **onomatopoeia** and **repetitive refrain**.
2. **Juvenile / Play Songs:** The poetry of childhood games. Characterized by **nonsense rhymes, strong rhythmic beats for clapping or skipping, and catchy, repetitive choruses**. Their poetry lies in the sheer joy of phonetic play, the mastering of language's rhythmic possibilities, and the encoding of simple social rules within game narratives. *Example:* The widespread West African counting/game song "*One, two, three, plé*..." uses rhythmic, nonsense syllabification to structure play. Its poetic core is **meter and rhyme for kinetic energy**.
3. **Naming Ceremony Songs:** These are **poems of identity and belonging**. Performed at the ritual bestowal of a name, they poetically link the new child to ancestors, lineage, and cosmic forces. They employ formal, declarative language, genealogical recitation, and potent metaphors wishing the child specific virtues. *Example:* In many Akan traditions, songs during the *Outdooring* might recite clan praises (**Abusua dwom**) and sing, "You have come from the great river of ancestry, bear this name and carry its strength." Poetically, they function as **lyric incantations and metonymic verse** (the name stands for the whole person's destiny).
4. **Labor Songs:** The **epic poetry of communal work**. Used in farming, rowing, pounding, or building, their primary function is to coordinate effort and alleviate drudgery. Their poetic form features a **strong, regular call-and-response structure**, a leader (*griot* or master singer) who improvises narrative or social commentary (the call), and a group providing a rhythmic, fixed refrain (the response). *Example:* The **"Mpintin" songs of the Akan** for pounding *fufu* create a powerful rhythm where the pestles become percussion instruments. The lead singer's verses might tell a story or crack jokes, while the group's response, "*Hey! Ho!*" provides the relentless beat. This is poetry as **social organizer and rhythmic engine**.
5. **Dirges & Elegies:** The **poetry of lament**. While often conflated, a *dirge* is specifically a funeral song of mourning, performative and raw, while an *elegy* is a more formal, reflective poem on death. Dirges are characterized by **melismatic weeping motifs, descending melodic lines, repetition of phrases of grief, and direct address to the deceased**. They are intensely personal yet follow traditional formulae. *Example:* The **Ewe *Aɖeŋu*** dirge of Ghana/Togo uses a descending pentatonic scale and phrases like "*Ami na mi tre?*" (Who will look after me now?) in structured, antiphonal exchanges between mourners. Poetically, they rely on **apostrophe** (addressing the dead), **hyperbole** in praising the deceased, and **refrain** to structure communal grief.
6. **Hymns / Religious Songs:** The **poetry of devotion and transcendence**. These songs, whether traditional or syncretic, use poetic language to bridge the human and the divine. They feature **reverential diction, invocational refrains, metaphors linking the spiritual to the natural world, and parallelistic structures** common in prayers. *Example:* The **Yoruba *Orin Ọlọrun*** (hymns to God) or songs to *Ọya* (goddess of wind) use poetic parallelism: "The river

flows, your mercy flows; the wind blows, your spirit blows." The key poetic device is **sacred metaphor and sustained invocation**.

7. **Nuptial / Wedding Songs:** The **poetry of union, fertility, and social transition**. They operate on two levels: public celebration and private instruction. Publicly, they are joyous, ribald, and celebratory, using **hyperbole and metaphor** to praise the families and wish prosperity. Privately, for the bride (in many traditions), they contain **didactic poetry** advising on marital duties, sung by elder women. *Example:* **Swahili wedding songs (*Nyimbo za harusi*)** might poetically describe the bride as "a precious pearl being set in gold," while the instructional songs might use **allegorical tales** about the clever wife or the patient husband. Their poetry blends **encomium** (praise) with **narrative verse**.
8. **Satirical & Topical Songs (Songs of Allusion):** The **poetry of social critique and news**. In many oral societies, songs were the primary medium for gossip, political commentary, and social sanction. Using **innuendo, metaphor, irony, and biting wit**, they could ridicule a miser, critique a chief's decision, or spread news of an event without naming names. *Example:* The **"Haló" songs of the Akan** or the **"Kwere" songs of Sukuma** in Tanzania are famous for their poetic subtlety and power. A singer might compose a verse about "a greedy hyena who stole the community's goat," with everyone understanding the human referent. This is poetry as **social radar and judicial force**.

WRITTEN LITERATURE

FICTION

Fiction is literature created from the imagination. Its primary purpose is not to provide a factual report but to tell a story that reveals truths about human nature, society, or existence through invented scenarios and characters.

Types of Fiction:

1. **Literary Fiction:** Prioritizes artistic style, psychological depth, and thematic complexity over plot-driven narrative. Focuses on the interior lives of characters and often employs innovative techniques. *Example:* **J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace***, a profound exploration of post-apartheid South Africa, guilt, and redemption through layered prose and moral ambiguity.
2. **Genre/Popular Fiction:** Follows specific conventions of a particular genre, often with a strong emphasis on plot and entertainment.
   - **Historical Fiction:** Sets a narrative in a specific, real historical period, often blending fictional characters with real events/figures. *Example:* **Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat*** (Mau Mau uprising).
   - **Science Fiction/Speculative Fiction:** Explores imaginative futures, alternative realities, or advanced technology to critique the present. *Example:* **Nnedi Okorafor's *Who Fears Death*** (post-apocalyptic Africa with magic).
   - **Mystery/Crime Fiction:** Centers on solving a crime or puzzle. *Example:* **Mukoma Wa Ngugi's *Nairobi Heat***.
   - **Romance:** Focuses on a central love story and emotional engagement.
   - **Fantasy:** Features magic, supernatural elements, and imaginary worlds. *Example:* **Tomi Adeyemi's *Children of Blood and Bone***.
3. **Magical Realism:** A specific mode where magical elements are woven seamlessly into a realistic environment, presented as ordinary. Common in post-colonial literature. *Example:* **Ben Okri's *The Famished Road***, where the spirit world (*abiku*) coexists with the gritty reality of a Nigerian ghetto.

4. **Fable & Allegory:** Short tales with a clear moral, often using animals as characters (fable). Extended metaphors where the entire narrative symbolizes a deeper political or moral meaning (allegory). *Example:* **Mongo Beti's *The Poor Christ of Bomba*** functions as a sharp allegory for the failures of colonial missionary work.

NONFICTION

Nonfiction is literature based on fact, reality, and actual events. Its primary purpose is to inform, explain, persuade, or document, though it may use literary techniques to enhance its appeal.

Types of Nonfiction:

1. **Autobiography/Biography:** The story of a person's life written by that person (auto) or by another (bio). *Example:* **Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*** (Autobiography). **Wole Soyinka's *You Must Set Forth at Dawn*** (Memoir).
2. **Essay:** A short piece of prose on a particular subject, presenting the author's argument or perspective.
    - **Personal Essay:** Explores a topic through the lens of the writer's own experience.
    - **Critical Essay:** Analyzes and evaluates a work of art or idea.
    - **Expository Essay:** Explains or informs objectively.
3. **Journalism & Reportage:** Factual reporting on current events, often involving investigation. *Example:* The works of **Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuściński on Africa**, though sometimes controversial, blend reportage with literary flair.
4. **History & Scholarship:** Systematic, researched accounts of past events or academic analyses. *Example:* **Cheikh Anta Diop's *The African Origin of Civilization***.
5. **Diary & Letters:** Private, firsthand accounts not originally intended for publication but valued as literary historical documents. *Example:* The diaries of **Sir Apolo Kagwa**, documenting Buganda's history.
6. **Travel Writing:** Accounts of journeys and explorations of places. *Example:* **Binyavanga Wainaina's *One Day I Will Write About This Place***, though a memoir, contains strong elements of travel writing within Kenya and South Africa.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FICTION AND NONFICTION

Fiction and nonfiction are two different types of literature that differ significantly in terms of their characteristics, purpose, and style. Here are some **differences** between the two:

- **Basis in reality**: Nonfiction is based on facts, real events, and real people, while fiction is made up and imagined.
- **Use of imagination**: Fiction relies heavily on the author's imagination, while nonfiction is more concerned with conveying facts.
- **Creative license**: Fiction authors have creative license to invent characters, settings, and events, while nonfiction authors must stick to the truth.
- **Storytelling approach**: Nonfiction can be presented in a variety of formats, such as memoirs or biographies, and is often written chronologically or as a series of events, while fiction is usually structured as a narrative with a specific plot and character development.
- **Narrative voice**: In nonfiction, the narrative voice tends to be objective and impartial, while in fiction, the narrative voice can vary depending on the character, and how the author chooses to present them.
- **Purpose**: Nonfiction is usually written to inform, educate or persuade, while fiction is written to entertain, inspire or evoke emotions.
- **Research**: Nonfiction writers spend time researching and verifying facts, while fiction writers generally do not have to research as extensively, as they are creating their own world.
- **Relevance**: Nonfiction can be more relevant to real-world situations or issues, while fiction can

provide a more escapist or imaginative experience.

- **Characters**: Fictional works are often characterized by invented characters, whereas nonfictional works are usually based on real people.
- **Plot**: Fictional works have a plot that is usually invented by the author, while nonfictional works focus on real events that have already occurred.
- **Writing style**: Fiction is more imaginative, creative and often includes figurative language, symbolism, and other literary devices, whereas nonfiction is more straightforward, and relies on a factual, clear and concise style.
- **Appeals to emotion vs reason**: Fiction aims to evoke emotions, while nonfiction aims to appeal to reason or logic.

NOVEL, NOVELLA, NOVELETTE, SHORT STORY & FLASH FICTION

- **Novel:** A long work of fiction that is typically over 40,000 words in length. It is usually structured around a central plot and often includes subplots and a wide range of characters.
- **Novella**: A shorter work of fiction that is longer than a short story but shorter than a novel, typically between 20,000 and 40,000 words in length. It usually focuses on one central conflict and has a limited number of characters.
- **Novelette**: A work of fiction that is longer than a short story but shorter than a novella, typically between 7,500 and 20,000 words in length. It can include multiple characters and subplots, but it generally focuses on one central conflict.
- **Short story**: A brief work of fiction that generally ranges from 1,000 to 7,500 words in length. It typically focuses on a single character, incident or setting and often has a surprise ending.
- **Flash fiction**: Extremely short works of fiction, usually 1,000 words or less. Flash fiction often focuses on a single incident or moment and may have a nonlinear structure.

TYPES OF NOVELS

- **Romance**: A romance novel is a type of novel that centers around the romantic relationship of two or more characters, often with a happy ending. Example: "Pride and Prejudice" by Jane Austen.
- **Mystery**: Fiction that involves a crime and the investigation to solve it. Examples include "The Da Vinci Code" by Dan Brown and "The Hound of Baskervilles" by Arthur Conan Doyle.
- **Thriller**: Fiction that creates intense feelings of excitement, fear, or suspense in the reader, often involving danger, espionage, or adventure. Examples include "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo" by Stieg Larsson and "Gone Girl" by Gillian Flynn.
- **Historical**: A historical novel is a type of novel that takes place in the past and often blends fiction with historical events or characters. Example: "The Pillars of the Earth" by Ken Follett. Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe (pre-colonial Nigeria), A Grain of Wheat by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (Kenya's independence struggle).
- **Science Fiction/Paranormal**: A novel that deals with futuristic or imaginary concepts, often exploring imaginative concepts like advanced science, technology, space exploration, time travel, and their impact on society as well as the potential consequences of scientific, social, and other innovations, such as "Brave New World" by Aldous Huxley, and *The Left Hand of Darkness* by Ursula K. Le Guin.
- **Fantasy**: A novel that takes place in a completely imaginary world, often involving magic or supernatural creatures such as "The Lord of the Rings" by J.R.R. Tolkien.
- **Bildungsroman**: A Bildungsroman novel is a type of novel that tells the coming-of-age story of a character, often focusing on personal growth and development. It chronicles the psychological, moral, and social growth of a protagonist from youth to adulthood. Examples: The River Between by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (Waiyaki), To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee (Scout Finch)
- **Gothic**: A Gothic novel is a type of novel that features supernatural or mysterious elements, often with a dark and gloomy atmosphere. Apart from creating terror and suspense, it features dark

settings (old castles, ruins, haunted or abandoned houses), supernatural elements, and intense emotions Example: "Frankenstein" by Mary Shelley.

- **Satire**: A satirical novel is a type of novel that uses humour, irony, exaggeration, and ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity, vices, or societal problems. Examples: *Animal Farm* by George Orwell, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* by Ayi Kwei Armah.
- **Horror**: A horror novel is a type of novel that is intended to scare the reader, often featuring supernatural or gruesome elements. Example: "The Shining" by Stephen King.
- **Crime/Detective**: Fiction that focuses on criminals or the criminal underworld, often involving theft, narcotics, or other illegal activities. Examples include "The Godfather" by Mario Puzo and "The Silence of the Lambs" by Thomas Harris.
- **Pastoral**: A literary work (such as a poem, play or novel) dealing with shepherds or rural life in a usually artificial manner and typically drawing a contrast between the innocence and serenity of the simple life and the misery and corruption of city and especially court life. In simple terms, pastoral refers to fiction that depicts rural life, typically with an emphasis on the simplicity and beauty of rural existence.
- **Realistic**: Presents life as it is, with believable characters, settings, and events. It often deals with social issues and everyday struggles. Examples: Houseboy by Ferdinand Oyono, A Walk in the Night by Alex La Guma. **Key Feature**: Faithful representation of reality.
- **Picaresque**: Follows the adventures of a roguish, low-class hero (the picaro) who lives by their wits in a corrupt society. Often episodic in structure. Examples: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain (partly), The Adventures of Roderick Random by Tobias Smollett.
- **Epistolary**: The story is told entirely through letters, telegrams, diary entries, newspaper articles and clippings, or other documents. Examples: *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker, *Letters of Love to the Dead* by A. Dellaira
- **Psychological**: Emphasizes the interior motives, thoughts, feelings, and mental states of characters over external action. Example: *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison.
- **Postcolonial**: Examines the cultural, social, and political impacts of colonialism and its aftermath in formerly colonized societies. Explores themes of identity, resistance, and hybridity. Examples: *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Petals of Blood* by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o.

BASIC ELEMENTS OF NOVELS AND SHORT STORIES

- **Narrative**: Both novels and short stories employ narrative as the primary means of telling a story. They follow a linear or non-linear structure and can be told from different perspectives.
- **Characters**: Characters are the people, animals, or objects that appear in a novel or short story. They can be complex or simple, and the reader may experience their growth, change, or transformation throughout the story.
- **Setting**: The setting of a novel or short story includes the time, place, and physical environment in which the action takes place.
- **Plot**: The plot of a novel or short story is the sequence of events that occurs, usually following a three-act structure: the exposition, the rising action, the climax, the falling action, and the resolution.
- **Conflict**: Conflict is a central element of most novels and short stories, as it creates tension and drama. It can be internal (within a character) or external (between characters, or between a character and their environment).
- **Themes**: Themes are the underlying ideas or messages communicated through a novel or short story. They are often universal and can relate to human experiences such as love, identity, loss, and survival.
- **Point of view**: Novels and short stories can be told from different points of view, such as first-person, second-person, or third-person narration.
- **Symbolism**: Symbolism is the use of objects, characters, or events to represent deeper meanings or ideas within the story.

- **Imagery**: Imagery refers to the use of sensory details to create vivid mental pictures in the reader's mind, often to enhance the emotional impact of the story.
- **Style and tone**: The style and tone of a novel or short story are created through the author's use of language, syntax, and literary devices. They can affect the mood and atmosphere of the story and can vary widely depending on the author's intention.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF NOVELS

- Novels are presented in prose or narrative form unlike plays which are presented in dialogues coupled with monologues, soliloquys and asides.
- Novels are relatively longer than other genres and cannot be read in one sitting.
- Novels are divided into paragraphs which form chapters unlike plays which are written in scenes which form acts and poems which are written in verses or lines that form stanzas.
- A novel may be fictitious or non-fictitious or both with a complicated plot.
- A novel is rich in flashbacks and foreshadowing than other genres of literature.
- A novel has more use of suspense than other genres of literature.

WHAT IS DRAMA?

Drama is a literary composition, normally in prose, telling a story and intended to be represented by actors impersonating the characters and speaking the dialogue. Theatrical plays in general, that can be composed for television, radio, or the cinema. Drama and **play** are synonymous. A play is a literary genre written in dialogue form. The play is the work of art that is written for the purpose of being acted on the stage. When a play is acted on the stage, it is called **drama**. The written script is called a **play**. The participants who take part in the play are called actors or actresses. A good example of a play is "**The Lion and the Jewel**" by Wole Soyinka. By looking at the content, plays/drama are divided into five main types namely: Tragedy, Comedy, Tragic-comedy, Historical drama, and Melo-drama.

DIFFERENTIATING DRAMA FROM PLAY

While often used interchangeably in casual discourse, "drama" and "play" occupy distinct conceptual territories in literary and performance studies. A play is a tangible, specific artifact: it is a written text, a script, composed of dialogue and stage directions, designed for performance. Think of it as the architectural blueprint. Drama, in contrast, is the broader genre, tradition, and essence of the enacted story; it is the conceptual framework and the emotional energy that the play seeks to embody. It is the phenomenon of conflict-driven human action presented before an audience.

KEY DIFFERENCES:

- **Concept vs. Artifact**: Drama is an abstract genre or category of literature and performance (like "poetry" or "novel"). A play is a concrete, singular work within that genre (like *Macbeth* or *The Lion and the Jewel*).
- **Scope and Scale**: Drama encompasses the entire tradition, from ancient Greek tragedies to contemporary postmodern performance art. A play is a discrete unit within that continuum. The drama of Wole Soyinka draws from Yoruba mythology, European modernism, and a unique poetic vision; his play *"Death and the King's Horseman*" is one specific manifestation of that drama.
- **Text vs. Performance Potential**: A play is fundamentally a text. Drama exists fully only in its potential or actual enactment. The written words of J.M. Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* constitute the play. The drama emerges in the live tension between Christy Mahon's boasts, the villagers' reactions, and the audience's shifting allegiances.
- **Universality vs. Particularity**: Drama refers to the universal principles of enacted conflict, catharsis, and spectacle. A play is a particular application of these principles to a specific story, time, and place. The drama of familial betrayal is universal; Femi Osofisan's play *The*

Engagement localizes it in a modern Nigerian context of corruption and moral compromise.

- **Live Essence vs. Literary Blueprint**: Drama inherently implies liveness, the "here and now" of actors and audience sharing a space-time. A play, as a text, can be read privately, divorced from that immediacy. The chilling drama of Ariel Dorfman's *Death and the Maid* depends on the live, shared breath of the audience with Paulina and Gerardo; the play-script is its silent record.
- **Analytical Lens vs. Object of Analysis**: One studies the drama in a play. One analyzes the dramatic techniques (irony, tension, peripeteia) that the playwright employs within the specific play. In analyzing Shakespeare's *Othello*, we examine how the drama of obsessive jealousy is constructed through the play's soliloquies, imagery, and the manipulative dialogue Iago speaks.
- **Improvisational Heart vs. Scripted Authority**: While plays are scripted, drama can exist in unscripted, improvisational forms (commedia dell'arte, some forms of street theatre). The drama of a marketplace argument can be raw and powerful, but it is not a play until it is shaped, structured, and codified into a repeatable text or score.
- **Historical/Anthropological Root vs. Literary Product**: Drama has roots in ritual, ceremony, and communal storytelling (like the Egungun masquerade of the Yoruba, which is sacred drama). A play is a secular, often author-driven, literary refinement of those ritualistic origins. Soyinka's drama in *A Dance of the Forests* directly channels this ritual energy into a modern play structure.
- **Adjective vs. Noun**: "Dramatic" describes qualities (tension, theatricality, emotional intensity) found in many forms, even novels or films. "Play" is strictly a noun denoting the theatrical work itself. A novel like Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* has many dramatic scenes (e.g., the killing of Ikemefuna), but it is not a play.
- **Metaphorical Usage**: "Drama" is used metaphorically to describe real-life situations of high conflict and emotion ("office drama"). "Play" does not commonly carry this metaphorical weight; it remains anchored to the realm of theatre and games.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF DRAMA

- Drama is meant for stage performance. Drama is written to be acted or staged by live actors to a live audience. And drama can be performed anywhere at any time. Other literary works like novels are written to be read and poems are written to be sung or recited.
- Drama is written in a dialogue form. Since drama is meant for stage performance it is written or printed in dialogue or conversations form that makes it easier to be acted. However, to make it live at some points the playwright may use monologues (soliloquies), poetic language, songs, or mime (dumb show).
- Drama is divided in the form of Acts and Scenes. An act is a major unit of action in a play and a scene is a smaller section or a subdivision of one act. Once act may have several scenes each carrying one event. Other works like novels are divided in forms of parts/chapters and paragraphs while poems are divided into verses and stanzas.
- Drama has stage direction. These are the instructions or notes which describe how the work is to be staged/performed. These show areas of the stage where the characters sit, stand, when they leave or enter, how the dress, time of the day when the curtain rises and falls etc. Other works of literature do not include stage direction because they are not meant to be performed.
- Drama has a strong influence on the audience. Drama allows the audience participation since people are attracted by actions; drama has a stronger influence than other literary works. People are tempted to live or act imitating the life and actions of the characters. Also, the audience can participate by clapping, laughing, screaming, frowning, or responding as the actors involve them.
- Drama makes extensive use of 1st person pronouns (I, me, we, us). Since drama is meant to be acted by actors, most characters speak from the first-person point of view. (I, me, we or us). Other works like novels make extensive use of 3rd person (he, she it, they).
- Drama uses shorter time in performance than novels. It takes only two to three hours to watch a performance but it takes days or weeks to finish reading one novel. This makes drama more

appealing to the audience since it is time considerate.

- Drama is characterized by action. When drama is presented on the stage it involves actions that are carried out by characters. Characters can fight, make love, laugh, cry, etc. all these add effect to the livelihood of the drama and make it more appealing to the audience.
- Drama has a language economy. Words are not wasted in drama. The playwrights usually choose the suitable words that express their intended meaning. Most plays are very short as compared to novels. For example, Soyinka's 'The trials of Brother Jero' and Ngugi's 'This Time Tomorrow' are very short but with strong messages.
- Drama involves many people in its production. For the drama to be staged many people are involved unlike novels and poems which can be produced by the authors only. In production of a drama there should be actors/actresses, the director, floor manager or location manager, production manager, designer (costumes and makeup) etc. on top of that there should be the live audience.
- Drama involves imitation of real-life events. Or it reflects the experiences of Humankind. Like other literary works Drama is a product of society. Drama imitates the real-life events and brings them on stage. This makes drama more meaningful to the audience.
- Drama can be performed anywhere and/or any time.
- Drama brings the whole world on stage.

TYPES OF PLAYS OR DRAMAS

- **Tragedy**: A drama that depicts the downfall of a heroic or noble character due to a tragic flaw or fate. Examples include Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and "Macbeth.", "**Kinjeketile**" by Ibrahim Hussein.
- **Comedy**: A drama that aims to amuse the audience through humor, usually ending with a happy resolution. Examples include Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" and Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest.", "**The Lion and the Jewel**" by Wole Soyinka.
- **Farce**: A type of comedy that involves exaggerated and nonsensical situations, often with physical humor. Examples include "Noises Off" by Michael Frayn and "The Inspector General" by Nikolai Gogol.
- **Absurdist**: A drama that emphasizes the meaninglessness and irrationality of human existence, often with surreal or nonsensical elements. Examples include Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" and Eugene Ionesco's "The Bald Soprano."
- **Melodrama**: A drama with exaggerated and emotional situations and characters, with a clear distinction between good and evil. Examples include early silent films with villainous mustache twirlers.
- **Musical**: A drama that includes songs, dances, and spoken dialogue to tell a story. Examples include "The Phantom of the Opera" and "Hamilton."
- **Historical**: A drama that is based on real historical events or people. Examples include "The Crucible" by Arthur Miller and "Schindler's List" by Steven Spielberg., "**Dedan Kimathi**" by Keneth Wetene.

SPECIAL TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED BY PLAYWRIGHTS

- **Dialogue**: Dialogue is central to playwriting, and playwrights will often employ specific techniques to create compelling and engaging conversations between characters. This can take the form of sharp wit, back-and-forth banter, or lyrical language that can be pleasing to read or listen to.
- **Characterization**: Characters are the driving force behind plays, and playwrights employ a variety of techniques to make them engaging and memorable. This can include creating complex or flawed characters that readers can relate to, providing vivid descriptions, or using actions and behaviors to reveal character traits.

- **Imagery**: Playwrights use imagery to create a powerful and visceral impact on the reader, and to help establish the mood of the play. By using descriptive language and powerful metaphors, playwrights can create vivid and memorable images that linger in the reader's mind.
- **Structure**: Playwrights often use specific structures to create dramatic tension and to keep readers engaged. This can include the use of cliffhangers at the end of acts or scenes, nonlinear narratives that jump back and forth in time, or other narrative devices that add depth and interest to the story.
- **Setting**: By establishing a vivid and engaging setting for their plays, playwrights can help draw the reader into the story and create a sense of atmosphere and mood. This can include providing rich and detailed descriptions of the physical environment, using lighting and sound to create specific moods, or employing other sensory details to immerse the reader in the world of the play.
- **Theme**: Playwrights may also use themes or symbols to create an emotional impact on the reader, and to help convey deeper meanings or messages. By using recurring symbols, motifs, or themes, playwrights can create complex and multilayered plays that challenge readers to think deeply about the issues and ideas being presented.

DRAMATIC TELEVISION SERIES

- **Legal dramas**: These television series focus on legal cases, often from the perspectives of lawyers, judges, and other legal professionals. Examples of legal dramas include "Law and Order" and "The Good Wife."
- **Medical dramas**: These television series focus on medical cases, often from the perspectives of doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals. Examples of medical dramas include "Grey's Anatomy" and "ER."
- **Crime dramas**: These television series focus on criminal cases, often from the perspectives of detectives, police officers, or the criminals themselves. Examples of crime dramas include "Breaking Bad" and "The Sopranos."
- **Historical dramas**: These television series are set in a past time and place and often dramatize historical events or figures. Examples of historical dramas include "Mad Men" and "Downton Abbey."
- **Political dramas**: These television series focus on political campaigns or political figures and their personal and professional lives. Examples of political dramas include "House of Cards" and "The West Wing."

SOAP OPERA

A soap opera is a long-running serialized drama that follows the daily lives of numerous characters, often including melodramatic elements and cliffhanger endings in each episode. The following are some of the distinctive features of a soap opera:

- **Length**: Soap operas are long-running television series that air on a daily or weekly basis, with episodes that typically last around 30 minutes.
- **Storylines**: Soap operas are characterized by complex, ongoing plotlines that focus on interpersonal relationships and conflicts between characters.
- **Suspense**: Soap operas often use cliffhanger endings to keep viewers coming back for more.
- **Production**: Soap operas typically have a lower budget and lower production values than other forms of television programming.

MUSICAL

A musical is a theatrical production that combines singing, dancing, and spoken dialogue to tell a story. The following are some of the distinctive features of a musical.

- **Music and dance**: Musicals are characterized by song and dance numbers that help to tell the story and convey emotions.

- **Live performance**: Musicals are typically performed live on stage in front of an audience.
- **Length**: Musicals can vary in length, from shorter one-act plays to full-length productions that run for several hours.
- **Variety**: Musicals can range from lighthearted comedies to serious dramas, with music and dance tailored to the style of the production.

MELODRAMA

A melodrama is a type of drama in which the characters' situations and emotions are exaggerated, often with a romantic storyline. **Features:**

- Emphasis on emotions and situations.
- Uses heightened dramatic techniques.
- Often features a hero, villain and an innocent in peril.

COMICS

Comics are a graphic medium that utilizes sequential art to tell stories. **Features:**

- Use of images to convey a story.
- Can deal with any genre of storytelling.
- Dialogue is typically presented in speech bubbles or caption boxes.

MOVIE

A movie or motion picture is a form of visual storytelling that utilizes moving images to create a narrative. **Features:**

- Depicts a story through moving images.
- Can use a wide range of storytelling techniques.
- Usually runs for more than one hour.

FILM

A film is similar to a movie, but can be used to describe any moving picture, including documentaries or silent films. **Features:**

- Depicts a story through moving images.
- Can range from silent to highly produced with special effects.
- Usually runs for more than one hour.

MUSIC

Music is a form of art that uses sound and rhythm to create an emotional experience. **Features:**

- Uses sound to create emotional experience.
- Can be performed live or recorded.
- Can vary in length and style.

COMMON TERMS USED IN DRAMA

- **Accent**: manner of speaking or pronunciation, as in a foreign accent; also means the emphasis or stress placed on a particular syllable or word.
- **Acoustics**: the quality of a room in respect to transmission of sound.
- **Act**: a major unit or division of a play.
- **Acting style**: a particular manner of acting which reflects cultural and historical influences.
- **Acting**: use of face, body, and voice to portray character.
- **Action**: the movement or development of the plot or story in a play; the sense of forward movement created by the sense of time and/or the physical and psychological motivations of characters.
- **Actor**: a performer who assumes the role of a character in a play, film, or television show.

- **Adventure**: A narrative that involves exciting or dangerous experiences, often involving physical risk, exploration, or escape.
- **Aesthetic distance**: the physical or psychological separation of the audience from the action of a play, needed to maintain the artistic illusion of the play.
- **Aesthetics**: branch of philosophy that studies the arts and, especially, the principles of beauty.
- **Allegory**: a dramatic work in which there is a one-to-one correspondence between the literal meaning and the underlying, or allegorical, meaning of the work. An example is the medieval play Everyman, in which the protagonist Everyman stands for all people.
- **Analysis**: in responding to dramatic art, the process of examining how the elements of drama—literary, technical, and performance—are used.
- **Ancient**: theater of ancient and lineage-based cultures, such as Near Eastern, African, European, and Native American, centered on religious ritual, ceremony, and storytelling.
- **Antagonist**: the opponent or adversary of the hero or main character of a drama; one who opposes and actively competes with another character in a play, most often with the protagonist.
- **Anthem**: A choral or vocal composition, often with a religious or political lyric.
- **Antihero**: a protagonist who does not have the heroic qualities of the traditional protagonist. Willy Loman in Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller is an example.
- **Arena stage**: a type of stage without a frame or arch separating the stage from the auditorium, in which the audience surrounds the stage area; see theater-in-the-round.
- **Articulation**: the clarity or distinction of speech.
- **Artistic choices**: selections made by theater artists about the situation, action, direction, and design in order to convey meaning.
- **Aside:** An aside is a dramatic technique in which a character speaks directly to the audience, breaking the fourth wall and adding depth to character development.
- **Audience**: the people who watch the performance; those for whom the performance is intended.
- **Audition**: a tryout for a part in a drama; also, the act of trying out.
- **Auditorium**: the part of the theater in which the audience sits; also called the house.
- **Backstage**: the area behind or beyond the stage that includes dressing rooms and wings.
- **Bard**: a person who composed and recited heroic or epic poems; William Shakespeare is referred to as "The Bard."
- **Blocking**: the path formed by the actor's movement on stage, usually determined by the director with assistance from the actor and often written down in a script using commonly accepted theatrical symbols.
- **Blurb**: A short description of a book, film, or other work, written and used for promotional purposes.
- **Body alignment**: physiologically correct posture and use of the body to ensure the maximum capacity and efficiency of breathing and movement.
- **Book**: the script of a play.
- **Borders**: short curtains hung at intervals above the acting area to hide lighting and flown scenery from the audience.
- **Box office**: an enclosed area, usually found in or adjoining the lobby of a theater, where tickets are sold; how well or poorly a production performs "at the box office" indicates a monetary measure of the success of ticket sales.
- **Box set**: a set with three walls and a ceiling, leaving the fourth wall to be imagined by the actors. The box set represents a real room with doors and windows that work.
- **Breath control**: proper use of the lungs and diaphragm muscle for maximum capacity and efficiency of breath for speaking.
- **Burlesque**: a form of low comedy that mocks a broad topic.
- **Cabaret**: a show produced in a small space with limited seating, such as a restaurant or nightclub.

- **Callback**: a second audition.
- **Cast**: the group of people selected to portray characters in a drama.
- **Catharsis**: the feeling of release felt by the audience at the end of a tragedy; the audience experiences catharsis, or is set free from the emotional hold of the action, after experiencing strong emotions and sharing in the protagonist's troubles.
- **Ceremony**: a formal observance or solemn rite.
- **Character**: a person portrayed in a drama, novel, or other artistic piece.
- **Characterization**: how an actor uses body, voice, and thought to develop and portray a character.
- **Choreography**: the movement of actors and dancers to music in a play.
- **Chorus**: a group of performers who sing, dance, or recite in unison; in Greek drama, the chorus was the group of performers who sang and danced between episodes, narrated off-stage action, and commented on events.
- **Classic**: popularly, any play written before the present century that has stood the test of time.
- **Classical drama**: formally, the drama of ancient Greece and Rome (800 BCE-400 AD); plays of the classical period instruct and perfect humans and present the universal ideal of beauty through logic, order, reason, and moderation. Tragedy was born during this period; the Greek Sophocles is one playwright of the period.
- **Classics**: A term used to describe works of literature, art, or music that have been recognized as having enduring relevance and lasting value over time, often considered to be timeless or universal in their themes and appeal.
- **Climax**: the point of greatest intensity in a series or progression of events in a play, often forming the turning point of the plot and leading to some kind of resolution.
- **Cold reading**: an audition in which the actor is asked to read from the script without any preparation; intended to give the director a better sense of the actor's potential and range.
- **Collaboration**: when artists work jointly together on an endeavor; a performance is an artistic collaboration because it relies on the work of a team of people.
- **Comedy**: a play that treats characters and situations in a humorous way. In Shakespeare's time, a comedy was any play with a happy ending that typically told the story of a likable character's rise to fortune. In ancient Greece, comedies dealt almost exclusively with contemporary figures and problems. Low comedy is physical rather than intellectual comedy; high comedy is more sophisticated, emphasizing verbal wit more than physical action.
- **Comic relief**: a break in the tension of a tragedy provided by a comic character, a comic episode, or even a comic line.
- **Commedia dell' arte**: a type of theater that originated in northern Italy and France and relied on stock characters with which the audience was familiar.
- **Community theater**: organizations of amateurs who produce and perform plays in a particular region or community.
- **Company**: everyone associated with a production.
- **Complication**: a factor, condition, and/or element that adds difficulty to the plot or conflict in a play.
- **Concentration**: the actor's focus, also called centering; focusing on the work at hand, being in character, or being in the moment.
- **Conflict**: the internal or external struggle between opposing forces, ideas, or interests that creates dramatic tension.
- **Contrast**: dynamic use of opposites, such as movement/stillness, sound/silence, and light/darkness.
- **Copyright**: ownership and rights to control all aspects of reproducing a work.
- **Costumes**: clothing and accessories worn by actors to portray character and period.
- **Criteria**: the standards on which an evaluation or judgment is based.

- **Critic**: a specialist in the evaluation and judgment of literary and artistic works, usually working in the media.
- **Critique**: evaluation or judgment.
- **Cue sheet**: a list of cues for the technicians.
- **Cue**: the words or action at which an actor is expected to deliver a line or perform another action. Also, a signal from the stage manager to the cast, stage crew, props manager, or lighting technician that a predetermined action—an entrance, sound effect, change in the set or lighting—is required.
- **Culture**: the customs, beliefs, arts, and way of life of a specific group of people.
- **Curtain call**: the appearance of the cast at the end of a play to receive applause from the audience.
- **Curtain**: the main drape, usually made of cloth, used to separate the stage from the auditorium.
- **Cut**: to stop action; delete.
- **Cyclorama**: a fabric drop hung from a curved or segmented batten, or a curved wall at the back of the stage, upon which light can be cast to create effects.
- **Denouement**: the solution, clarification, and/or unraveling of the plot of a play.
- **Description**: in responding to dramatic art, the process of telling what was seen and heard during the performance.
- **Designers**: persons responsible for planning visual and sound aspects of a production, including costumes, set, props, lights, makeup, and sound.
- **Deus ex machina**: literally, "god from the machine"; refers to the character in classical Greek tragedy who entered the play from the heavens at the end of the drama to resolve or explain the conflict; in modern drama, it refers to any arbitrary means of plot resolution.
- **Development**: progression of the plot or conflict in a play.
- **Dialect**: a nonstandard way of speaking; may be related to region, class, trade, etc.
- **Dialogue**: spoken conversation used by two or more characters to express thoughts, feelings, and actions.
- **Diction**: selection and pronunciation of words; clarity of speech.
- **Director**: the person who is responsible for the overall interpretation of a dramatic work, bringing all the elements together to create a unified production.
- **Discovery**: a revelation; something that is suddenly revealed about a character or situation in a play.
- **Domestic drama**: a style of drama characterized by a domestic setting and a protagonist who is a common man.
- **Downstage**: the area of the stage closest to the audience.
- **Drama**: the art of composing, writing, acting, or producing plays; a literary composition intended to portray life or character or enact a story, usually involving conflicts and emotions exhibited through action and dialogue, designed for theatrical performance.
- **Dramatic media**: means of enacting stories by way of stage, film, television, radio, or computer discs.
- **Dramatic play**: spontaneous dramatic enactment, often done by children pretending or imitating while playing.
- **Dramaturg**: person who assists the director by researching the context of a play, including the historical periods and biographical information about the playwright; person who assists the playwright with clarifying and revising the script in progress.
- **Dress rehearsal**: a rehearsal, usually the last one before performances begin, in which all lighting, costumes, makeup, set changes, props, sound effects, and special effects are used.
- **Dresser**: crew person assigned to help with quick changes of costume and general maintenance of costumes.

- **Drop**: a large cloth (often painted) used for creating a scene or picture background on stage.
- **Duet**: in acting, when two people perform on stage.
- **Electronic media**: means of communication characterized by the use of technology; e.g., radio, television, computers (virtual reality).
- **Elements of drama**: The elements of drama, by which dramatic works can be analyzed and evaluated, can be categorized into three major areas: literary elements, technical elements, and performance elements.
    (a) Literary elements include storyline (plot), character, story organization (beginning, middle, end), plot structures (rising action, turning point, falling action), conflict, suspense, theme, language, style, dialogue, monologue.
    (b) Technical elements include scenery (set), costumes, props, lights, sound, music, makeup.
    (c) Performance elements include acting (e.g., character motivation and analysis, empathy), speaking (breath control, vocal expression and inflection, projection, speaking style, diction), and nonverbal expression (gestures, body alignment, facial expression, character blocking, movement).
- **Empathy**: the capacity to relate to the feelings of another.
- **Ensemble**: the dynamic interaction and harmonious blending of the efforts of the many artists involved in the dramatic activity of theatrical production.
- **Entrance**: stage direction indicating the act of entering the play area during a performance.
- **Environment**: physical surroundings that establish place, time, and atmosphere/mood; the physical conditions that reflect and affect the emotions, thoughts, and actions of characters.
- **Epilogue**: A concluding section of a literary work, often used to comment on or provide closure to the events of the main narrative.
- **Epilogue**: a summary speech delivered at the end of a play that explains or comments on the action.
- **Evaluate**: to judge a play or performance.
- **Exit**: stage direction indicating an act of leaving the stage.
- **Exposition**: the part of a play that introduces the theme, chief characters, and current circumstances.
- **Expression**: physical and vocal aspects used by an actor to convey mood, feeling, or personality.
- **Extemporaneous**: composed or performed with little or no previous preparation; similar to impromptu.
- **Falling action**: the series of events following the climax.
- **Farce**: an extreme form of comedy that depends on quick tempo and flawless timing and is characterized by improbable events and farfetched coincidences; from the French meaning "to stuff."
- **Flashback**: in a nonlinear plot, to go back in time to a previous event; a flashforward would move the action into the future.
- **Flat**: a wooden frame, usually covered with painted cloth, used to create walls or separations on stage.
- **Fly crew**: stagehands to raise and lower flown scenery and draperies.
- **Fly gallery**: an area against one of the backstage walls where the fly rope and pulley system are operated.
- **Fly**: to raise, lower, or hoist scenery to or from the flies onto the stage.
- **Focus**: in lighting, the adjustment of the size and shape of a stage light and/or the direction in which it is aimed; in acting, the act of concentrating or staying in character.
- **Foil**: one who by strong contrast underscores the distinctive characteristics of another and, sometimes, prevents someone or something from being successful.
- **Foreshadowing**: an indication beforehand of something that is about to happen.

- **Fourth wall**: the invisible wall of a set through which the audience sees the action of the play.
- **Genre**: a category of literary or dramatic composition; drama is a literary genre. Drama is further divided into tragedy, comedy, farce, and melodrama, and these genres, in turn, can be subdivided.
- **Genre**: A category or type of literature, art, music, or film characterized by its form, style, or content.
- **Gesture**: any movement of the actor's head, shoulder, arm, hand, leg, or foot to convey meaning.
- **Green room**: a waiting area offstage to be used by actors.
- **Hand props**: properties such as tools, weapons, or luggage that are carried on stage by an individual actor.
- **Imaging**: a technique which allows students to slow down and focus individually on an issue. The students, sitting quietly with eyes closed, allow pictures to form in their minds. These images may be motivated by bits of narration, music, sounds, smells, etc.
- **Imitate**: to copy or mimic the actions, appearance, mannerisms, or speech of others.
- **Improvisation**: the spontaneous use of movement and speech to create a character or object in a particular situation; acting done without a script.
- **Inflection**: change in pitch or loudness of the voice.
- **Interaction**: the action or relationship among two or more characters.
- **Intermission**: a brief break between acts, in which the house lights come on and the audience may leave their seats.
- **Interpretation**: the determination of meaning in a literary work; in responding to dramatic art, the process of identifying the point, ideas, or themes in the play and how the plot relates to the major idea or theme. In a dramatic production, the director, and perhaps others, will decide how to interpret the play for the audience.
- **Irony**: an implied discrepancy between what is said and what is meant. There are several forms of irony. Verbal irony is when a writer or speaker says one thing and means something else (often the opposite of what is said). When the audience perceives something that a character does not know, that is dramatic irony. Situational irony can be described as a discrepancy between expected results and the actual results.
- **Isolation**: control of isolated body parts; the ability to control or move one part of the body independently of the rest.
- **Judgment**: in responding to dramatic art, the process of evaluating the play and performance.
- **Kinesthetic**: resulting from the sensation of bodily position, presence, or movement.
- **Language**: in drama, the particular manner of verbal expression, the diction or style of writing, or the speech or phrasing that suggests a class or profession or type of character.
- **Legend**: an unverifiable story popularly accepted as historical and handed down by tradition from earlier times.
- **Lighting**: the placement, intensity, and color of lights to help communicate environment, mood, or feeling.
- **Lines**: the dialogue of a play; the words actors say in performance.
- **Listening**: paying attention to what is being said.
- **Literary devices**: word patterns or combinations used to elicit a certain audience response; e.g., symbolism, foreshadowing.
- **Makeup**: costumes, wigs, and body paint used to transform an actor into a character.
- **Mask**: headdress used to cover the face and enable the wearer to portray a particular character or animal. Also, to mask a set is to use flats or drapes to block the sightlines of the audience so they cannot see behind the set.
- **Melodrama**: a style of play, which originated in the 19th century, relying heavily on sensationalism and sentimentality. Melodramas tend to feature action more than motivation, stock characters, and a strict view of morality in which good triumphs over evil.

- **Memoir**: A written work in which an author describes personal experiences and observations.
- **Mime**: acting without words.
- **Mimicry**: the practice of mimicking or imitating.
- **Mirroring**: copying the movement and/or expression or look of someone else exactly.
- **Monologue**: a long speech made by one actor; a monologue may be delivered alone or in the presence of others.
- **Mood**: the tone or feeling of the play, often engendered by the music, setting, or lighting.
- **Motivation**: the reason or reasons for a character's behavior; an incentive or inducement for further action for a character.
- **Musical**: a play in which the story is told through a combination of spoken dialogue and musical numbers.
- **Narrative**: A story or account of events, experiences, or imaginary worlds, told in speech, writing, or other forms of representation.
- **Off book**: when the actor has memorized his or her lines completely.
- **On book**: a rehearsal with scripts.
- **Pantomime**: acting without words.
- **Parody**: a mocking or satirical imitation of a literary or dramatic work.
- **Performance**: a presentation of a drama.
- **Personal props**: small props that are usually carried in an actor's costume, **e.g.,** money or a pen.
- **Places**: the stage command for actors to take their positions at the opening of an act or scene.
- **Playwright**: a person who writes a play.
- **Plot development**: the organization or building of the action in a play.
- **Plot**: the events of a play or arrangement of action, as opposed to the theme.
- **Producer**: the person who puts together a theatrical production, obtaining the financing, hiring the director and other stage personnel, supervising the budget, leasing rights and space, etc.
- **Production**: the staging of a dramatic work for presentation to an audience.
- **Projection**: how well the voice carries to the audience.
- **Prologue**: a speech which introduces a play.
- **Prologue**: An introductory section of a literary work, typically giving background information or setting the scene for the main narrative.
- **Prompt**: to give actors their lines as a reminder; the prompter is the one who assists actors in remembering their lines.
- **Props**: short for properties; any article, except costume or scenery, used as part of a dramatic production; any moveable object that appears on stage during a performance, from a telephone to a train.
- **Prose**: A form of written or spoken language that is not in verse, usually characterized by natural flow of speech and grammatical structure.
- **Protagonist**: the main character or hero in a play or other literary work.
- **Publicity**: the distribution of information to the public to make the theater and its productions attractive and accessible.
- **Puppetry**: the art of creating and manipulating puppets in a theatrical performance. A puppet is a figure (as of a person or animal), generally operated by hand, although there are many kinds of puppets.
- **Radio Play:** A radio play is a form of audio entertainment broadcast on the radio that typically involves actors performing a script. An example of a well-known radio play is "The War of the Worlds" by Orson Welles.
- **Reader's theater**: dramatic presentation in which two or more oral readers interpret a characterized script with the aim of stimulating the audience to imaginatively experience the literature.

- **Rehearsal**: a practice session in which the director works with cast and crew.
- **Rendering**: a drawing or pictorial representation of a designer's ideas or concept for a play's set or costumes.
- **Resolution**: how the problem or conflict in a drama is solved or concluded.
- **Reversal**: when an action produces the opposite of what is desired or expected.
- **Review**: a critic's analysis of a performance.
- **Rhetorical devices**: language and effects used to impress or persuade the audience.
- **Rhetorical question**: a question used for effect, but not necessarily needing to be answered.
- **Rising action**: a series of events following the initial incident and leading up to the dramatic climax.
- **Ritual**: a prescribed form or ceremony; drama grew out of religious ritual.
- **Role playing**: improvising movement and dialogue to put oneself in another's place in a particular situation, often to examine the person(s) and/or situation(s) being improvised.
- **Role**: the character portrayed by an actor in a drama.
- **Royalties**: monies paid for permission to stage a play.
- **Satire**: a play in which sarcasm, irony, and ridicule are used to expose or attack folly or pretension in society.
- **Scenario**: an outline of a hypothesized or projected chain of events or plot for a dramatic or literary work.
- **Scene**: a small section or portion of a play.
- **Scenery**: the theatrical equipment, such as curtains, flats, backdrops, or platforms, used in a dramatic production to communicate the environment.
- **Screenplay:** A screenplay is a script written for a movie or film. An example of a famous movie screenplay is "The Godfather" by Mario Puzo and Francis Ford Coppola.
- **Script scoring**: the marking of a script for one character, indicating interpretation, pauses, etc.
- **Script:** A script is a written document that outlines the dialogue, action, and directions for actors to follow in a theatrical production, television show, or film.
- **Script**: the written dialogue, description, and directions provided by the playwright.
- **Scripture:** Scripture typically refers to religious texts that are considered sacred or authoritative in a particular religion. Examples of scripture include the Bible, the Quran, and the Bhagavad Gita.
- **Sensory recall**: an acting technique whereby a sight, smell, taste, sound, or feeling is recalled along with its cause and the actor's reaction to it.
- **Set designer**: the person who designs the physical surroundings in which the action of the play takes place.
- **Set**: the physical surroundings, visible to the audience, in which the action of the play takes place.
- **Setting**: when and where the action of a play takes place.
- **Soliloquy**: a speech in which an actor, usually alone on stage, speaks the inner thoughts of his/her character aloud.
- **Sound devices**: in literature, use of repetition and parallel structure, using words or phrases more than once for emphasis.
- **Sound elements**: music, sound effects, actors' voices.
- **Sound**: the effects an audience hears during a performance to communicate character, context, or environment.
- **Speaking style**: the mode of expression or delivery of lines.
- **Special effects**: visual or sound effects used to enhance a theatrical performance.
- **Spectacle**: the scenery, costumes, and special, or visual, effects in a production.
- **Stage business**: actions or behavior of an actor on stage used to give information, enhance character, define focus, or establish importance.

- **Stage crew**: the personnel who set up and manage the scenery and props for a performance.
- **Stage directions**: instructions in the script that tell the actors what to do and where to move on stage; may also provide information about the setting.
- **Stage manager**: person in charge of everything that happens backstage.
- **Stage presence**: the level of comfort, commitment, and energy an actor appears to have on stage.
- **Stage**: The stage is the central platform or area where a performance takes place in a theater or studio. It is usually raised from the floor and can have various configurations. The stage can feature various set designs and props to create a particular theatrical setting, and is where actors perform and the audience watches the show.
- **Staging**: another term for blocking; deliberate choices about where the actors stand and how they move on stage to communicate character relationships and plot and to create interesting stage pictures.
- **Storyline:** the plot or plan of action.
- **Storytelling**: the act of telling a story in the oral tradition.
- **Strike**: the removal of all stage equipment, including scenery, props, lights, and costumes, from the stage area.
- **Studio**: A studio is a space that is used for rehearsing, recording or broadcasting performances. It is usually smaller than a theater or a stage and is used for more intimate performances or recordings. Studios are often used for filming movies, TV shows, or for recording music.
- **Stylization**: the shaping of dramatic material, settings, or costumes in a deliberately nonrealistic manner.
- **Suspense**: a feeling of uncertainty as to the outcome, used to build interest and excitement on the part of the audience.
- **Suspense**: A feeling of uncertainty, anticipation, or anxiety created by an author to keep readers or viewers engaged and interested in the outcome of the narrative.
- **Symbol**: an object or event used in literature to represent something else; often this representation alludes to a deeper meaning. Symbolism is the use of symbolic language, imagery, or color to evoke emotions or ideas.
- **Tableau**: a technique in creative drama in which actors create a frozen picture, as if the action were paused; plural is tableaux.
- **Technical rehearsal**: a rehearsal at which lighting, scenery, and props are tested to ensure that changes go smoothly.
- **Telenovela:** A telenovela is a type of dramatic television series popular in Latin American countries that typically features romantic storylines involving complicated relationships.
- **Teleplay**: A teleplay is a script written for television. An example of a well-known teleplay is "Breaking Bad" by Vince Gilligan.
- **Tempo**: the pace of a scene or a play.
- **Tension**: the atmosphere created by unresolved, disquieting, or inharmonious situations that human beings feel compelled to address; the state of anxiety the audience feels because of a threat to a character in a play.
- **Text**: the basis of dramatic activity and performance; a written script or an agreed-upon structure and content for an improvisation.
- **Theater** (**or theatre**): the imitation/representation of life, performed for other people; the performance of dramatic literature; drama; the milieu of actors and playwrights; the place that is the setting for dramatic performances.
- **Theater games**: improvisational exercises structured by the director or teacher to achieve a specific objective, such as breaking down inhibitions or establishing trust.
- **Theater**: A theater is a venue for live performances, such as plays, musicals, operas, and ballets. It is a larger venue than a studio and is designed to accommodate a larger audience. Theaters often have a stage, an orchestra pit, and seating for the audience.

- **Theater-in-the-round**: an acting area or stage that may be viewed from all sides simultaneously.
- **Theme**: the basic idea of a play; the idea, point of view, or perception that binds together a work of art.
- **Timing**: includes setting cues for effects and lighting, synchronizing two or more things that must happen simultaneously, and establishing the pace at which lines will be delivered or the play performed.
- **Tragedy**: in Greek theater, a play depicting man as a victim of destiny. The characteristics of tragedy have evolved over time to include any serious play in which man is a victim of fate, a character flaw, moral weakness, or social pressure. According to Aristotle, the purpose of tragedy is to arouse pity and fear in the audience and purge them at the play's conclusion (catharsis).
- **Tragic flaw**: the defect in the tragic hero that leads to his or her fall.
- **Tragic hero**: the central figure in a tragedy; typically, a tragic hero is a person of basically good character who passes from happiness to misery because of a character flaw or error in judgment.
- **Turning point**: the climax or high point of a story, when events can go either way.
- **Understudies**: actors who are able to play major roles in the event the originally cast actors cannot.
- **Upstage**: (noun) the area on stage farthest from the audience, toward the backstage wall.
- **Upstage**: (verb) to deliberately draw the audience's attention away from another actor or actors by overacting, using flashy bits of business, or other means; term originated from an actor purposefully positioning himself upstage of the other actors so that they must turn their backs on the audience to deliver their lines to him.
- **Vocal expression**: how an actor uses his or her voice to convey character.
- **Vocal projection**: directing the voice out of the body to be heard clearly at a distance.
- **Voice**: the combination of vocal qualities an actor uses such as articulation, phrasing, and pronunciation.
- **Word play**: verbal fencing, punning, or mock bickering. Shakespeare's plays are known for their word play.
- **Workshop**: a place for putting together and polishing a play. A workshop production is a work in progress. To workshop a play is to prepare it for performance and present it to a select group of advisers who suggest changes, adjustments, and improvements.

THE ANATOMY OF POETRY:

What Is Poetry?

Poetry is not merely a genre of literature; it is a concentrated mode of human consciousness, a ritual of language that distils experience into patterns of sound, image, and breath. Unlike prose, which primarily navigates the world of narrative and exposition, poetry operates in the realm of the symbolic and the sensory. It is, in the words of Nigerian poet Gabriel Okara, “the language of the soul speaking to the soul,” where the arrangement of words on the page is as critical as their dictionary definitions. In an African context, this definition must be expanded beyond the written word. Poetry here is ancestral breath made audible; it is the rhythmic foundation of the griot’s epic, the incantatory power of the praise-singer’s *oriki*, and the communal lament of the funeral dirge. It is an artistic expression where emotion, memory, and cultural ideology are forged into a rhythmically patterned and emotionally charged linguistic form. At its core, it is language used with concentrated intensity to evoke emotion, create beauty, and convey complex experience. The poem, therefore, becomes a vessel—a crafted object of language that carries within its structure the heartbeat of individual and collective experience.

POET, POEM, AND PERSONA

Understanding a poem requires disentangling three distinct entities: the poet, the poem, and the persona. The **poet** is the historical individual—the craftsman who selects, arranges, and agonizes over words.

The **poem** is the finished artifact, an autonomous world of meaning crafted from verse, line, and stanza. Most crucially, the **persona** is the speaking voice within that world, a dramatic character created by the poet. This distinction is vital; to confuse the persona with the poet is to commit a fundamental critical error. The poet creates a mask through which the poem is filtered.

Consider Okot p'Bitek's monumental work, *Song of Lawino*. The poet, p'Bitek, was a highly educated Ugandan man, a scholar and social critic. The persona of the poem, however, is Lawino, an uneducated Acoli woman fiercely lamenting her husband's Westernization and the erosion of their traditional culture. Her voice is raw, passionate, and strategically "unschooled" in European literary conventions:

"Husband, now you despise me
Now you treat me with spite…
You compare me with the rubbish in the rubbish pit."

Lawino's voice is a brilliant artistic construct. p'Bitek wields this persona not to speak *as himself*, but to launch a devastating critique of post-colonial alienation from within the very heart of the culture he feels is under threat. The **addressee**—her husband Ocol—is the silent listener, but the true audience is the nation itself, forced to hear Lawino's piercing lament.

Similarly, in Kofi Awoonor's "Songs of Sorrow," the persona is a collective "we," a voice burdened by historical trauma and displacement:

"Dzogbese Lisa has treated me thus
It has brought me the pain of death.
I am broken, the supporter has broken."

This is not merely Awoonor's personal grief; it is the persona of a people singing a dirge for their fractured world. The poet channels a communal spirit, demonstrating how the persona can expand beyond the individual to embody a historical consciousness.

LINE, STANZA, AND THE ARCHITECTURE OF VERSE

The architecture of a poem is built from specific, interdependent units. The **line** is the fundamental particle, the basic breath-unit of poetry. It is a distinct row of words whose termination is a deliberate artistic choice, not a grammatical inevitability. The poet's manipulation of line breaks—where to pause, where to spill over—is one of their most powerful tools for controlling pace, emphasis, and meaning.

The **stanza** is the poem's paragraph—a grouped set of lines, visually separated by space, that often forms a complete unit of thought or imagery. Stanzas shape how we experience the poem's argument, providing rhythmic pauses and structural cohesion. They are categorized by the number of lines they contain, from the pithy, proverbial **couplet** (2 lines) to the narrative-ready **quatrain** (4 lines) and the complex **octave** (8 lines). Leopold Senghor's "New York" employs sleek, cinematic quatrains to structure his meditation on the modern metropolis, each stanza a distinct shot in his visual and philosophical film.

Underpinning the flow of lines is **meter**—the measured, rhythmic pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables. This pattern is built from **feet**, combinations of stressed (/) and unstressed (˘) syllables. The interaction of these units creates the poem's musical skeleton. For instance, a line described as **iambic pentameter** is built from five iambic feet (˘ /), the steady da-DUM rhythm that mirrors the natural cadence of English speech and has been powerfully adopted in African poetic drama, such as in Wole Soyinka's plays.

METER AND METRICAL FEET

Meter is the pulse of a poem. It can hypnotize, agitate, soothe, or march. The type of metrical foot used determines this rhythmic character.

- **The Iamb (˘ / - da-DUM):** The iamb's unstressed-stressed pattern is the workhorse of English poetry, creating a natural, fluid, and often reflective rhythm. **Iambic pentameter** (five iambs per line) carries the weight of Shakespearean drama and the reflective depth of much lyric poetry. In an African context, this meter can lend a formal, oratorical gravity, as seen in the translated works of p'Bitek or the contemplative verses of South African poet Mazisi Kunene.
- **The Trochee (/ ˘ - DUM-da):** The inverse of the iamb, the trochee begins with a stress, creating a decisive, falling, and often incantatory rhythm. This is the rhythm of spells, chants, and assertive declarations. It is the dominant pulse in much traditional African oral poetry, such as Yoruba *Oriki* (praise poetry). Listen to the trochaic thrust in this traditional *Oriki* line: "**A**-kí-ni **o**-jó **a**- mọ̀ **ẹ**-ni-kán." The strong opening beats demand attention and invoke presence, perfectly suited for calling forth the essence of the subject being praised.
- **The Anapest (˘ ˘ / - da-da-DUM):** Two light syllables followed by a heavy one create a galloping, narrative, or breathless rhythm. It propels the reader forward. One can hear its energetic drive in the works of poets like Christopher Okigbo, where cascading rhythms build toward ecstatic or visionary climaxes.
- **The Dactyl (/ ˘ ˘ - DUM-da-da):** A stressed syllable followed by two unstressed ones creates a waltzing, flowing, sometimes melancholy rhythm. While less common as a sustained meter in English, its lilting quality can be used for musical effect or to evoke a sense of sweeping movement.
- **The Spondee (/ / - DUM-DUM):** Two consecutive stressed syllables act as a rhythmic brake or emphasis. It is used sparingly to slow the line, add weight, or mimic a heavy sound (like a heartbeat or a drum stroke). In Dennis Brutus's prison poetry, spondaic moments can convey the thud of oppression or the unwavering resolve of the spirit: "The **hard stone** grips."

Masterful poets often blend these feet within a dominant meter to create expressive variation, ensuring the rhythm serves the emotion rather than becoming a mechanical cage.

RHYME, ALLITERATION, ASSONANCE, AND CONSONANCE

Poetry's music is created not only by rhythm but by the artful repetition of sounds. **Rhyme**—the echo of identical or similar concluding syllables—is the most recognized sonic device. It can create closure (in a couplet), pattern (in a rhyme scheme), or a sense of playful inevitability.

- **End rhyme** occurs at line endings, while
- **Internal rhyme** plants echoes within a line, enriching its texture.
- **Slant rhyme** (e.g., *groin/grown*) offers a subtler, sometimes dissonant, connection.

African poetry, particularly that rooted in oral tradition, often relies more heavily on other, more intricate sound patterns than on end-rhyme.

- **Alliteration** is the repetition of initial consonant sounds. It can create a biting, percussive effect or a smooth, flowing one. In Christopher Okigbo's "Elegy for Slit-Drum," alliteration connects and intensifies the imagery: *"**S**wift **s**ank the **s**un / **S**hadow **s**ilent."* The sibilant 's' evokes both the swiftness of descent and the silence that follows.
- **Assonance** is the repetition of vowel sounds in nearby words. It creates mood and internal resonance. In Gabriel Okara's "The Snowflakes Sail Gently Down," assonance weaves a soft, melancholic atmosphere: "The **ea**sy **we**eping of the **ea**ves." The long 'e' sound binds the words together in a sigh of gentle sorrow.
- **Consonance** is the repetition of consonant sounds anywhere in nearby words (not just at the beginning). It creates a subtler, often haunting, sense of connection. Kofi Awoonor uses it to evoke loss: "The **l**ost **l**aughter of chi**ld**ren." The recurring 'l' and 'd' sounds feel like faint, lingering echoes of a vanished joy.

These devices are not mere decoration. In oral performance, they aid memorization. On the page, they create a subconscious web of connection, unifying disparate images and deepening the emotional resonance of the language.

ESSENTIAL STRUCTURAL AND FIGURATIVE DEVICES

Beyond sound, poets wield a range of structural and figurative tools to sculpt meaning.

- **Enjambment vs. End-Stopping:** An **end-stopped** line concludes with a punctuation mark, creating a pause and emphasizing the line as a unit. **Enjambment** occurs when a sentence or clause runs over a line break without punctuation. This creates urgency, surprise, or fluidity, forcing the reader to move swiftly to the next line to complete the sense. In Awoonor's "The Sea Eats the Land at Home," enjambment mimics the relentless, overflowing advance of the water: "A so**lo** / bird per**ched** / on the **heap** / of our **home**." The thought spills over, visually enacting the inundation described.
- **Caesura:** A deliberate pause *within* a line, often marked by punctuation (comma, dash, period). It creates a moment for reflection, dramatic emphasis, or a shift in thought. Congolese poet Tchicaya U Tam'si uses it to masterful effect, carving his lines into stark, philosophical fragments: "I am the silence of things — always, || and the dialogue of shadows." The double vertical bar (||) marks a powerful caesura, separating and equating two profound, paradoxical states of being.
- **Imagery:** Language that appeals to the senses (sight, sound, touch, taste, smell). It is the primary method for making the abstract concrete. Poets like Okigbo and Soyinka are masters of dense, synesthetic imagery, painting vivid pictures that carry symbolic weight.
- **Figurative Language:** This includes **metaphor** (direct identification: "You are the jungle") and **simile** (comparison using 'like' or 'as': "Your love is like a barbed wire fence"). It is the engine of poetic connection, creating new understandings by linking unlike things. In Chenjerai Hove's poem, a metaphor for political oppression becomes visceral: *"The word is a fist / holding sharp knives."*
- **Symbolism:** When an image or object accrues meaning beyond its literal self, it becomes a symbol. The "stone" in Brutus's poetry is not just a rock; it symbolizes the unyielding nature of the apartheid prison, but also the enduring will of the prisoner.
- **Tone and Mood: Tone** is the speaker's attitude toward the subject (satirical, elegiac, celebratory). **Mood** is the emotional atmosphere evoked in the reader. A poem's tone might be bitterly ironic while its mood is one of profound despair.
- **Diction and Syntax: Diction** is word choice—whether the language is Latinate and formal, vernacular and sharp, or archaic and resonant. **Syntax** is sentence structure. Poetic syntax often inverts or compresses normal word order for emphasis, rhythm, or mystery.

MAJOR POETIC FORMS: FROM SONNET TO SONG

Poets work within and against established forms, containers that shape expression.

- **The Sonnet:** A 14-line lyric poem in iambic pentameter with a strict rhyme scheme. The **Petrarchan** sonnet splits into an octave (problem) and sestet (resolution/volta). The **Shakespearean** sonnet uses three quatrains and a conclusive couplet. African poets have adeptly used this European form for their own ends. South Africa's **Dennis Brutus** wrote searing sonnets from prison (e.g., *Letters to Martha*), the form's tight structure containing and intensifying the anguish of confinement.
- **The Ode:** A formal, elevated lyric poem of praise or meditation, often addressing an object, person, or abstract idea. Wole Soyinka's "**Death in the Dawn**" is a modern, tragic ode. It begins with the ceremonial praise of a journey ("Traveller, you must set out…") but twists into a lament for a life—and an innocence—shattered by a roadside accident. The ode's traditional grandeur is invoked only to be fractured by modern violence.

- **The Elegy:** A poem of mourning, lament, and consolation. While often for the dead, it can mourn any profound loss. Kofi Awoonor's "**Songs of Sorrow**" is a cornerstone of the African elegiac tradition. It uses repetition, direct address, and imagery of brokenness ("I am broken, the supporter has broken") to voice a grief that is both personal and ancestral, for individuals and for a people displaced by the slave trade and colonialism.
- **Free Verse:** Poetry liberated from regular meter and rhyme. Its rhythm derives from the natural cadences of speech, rhetorical patterning, and strategic line breaks. It is the dominant form of much 20th and 21st-century poetry, offering maximum flexibility. The works of **Gabriel Okara** ("The Fisherman's Invocation") and **Syl Cheney-Coker** are masterclasses in using free verse to capture the specific rhythms of a place and a psyche.
- **Blank Verse:** Unrhymed iambic pentameter. It combines the formal dignity of meter with the flexibility of no rhyme, making it ideal for dramatic speech and extended narrative. **Wole Soyinka** uses it powerfully in his plays, such as *The Swamp Dwellers* and *Death and the King's Horseman*, giving his characters a poetic gravity that bridges the colloquial and the mythical.

AFRICAN ORAL POETIC TRADITIONS

Any study of African poetry is incomplete without acknowledging its deep roots in orature—literature created for and transmitted through performance.

- **Praise Poetry (*Izibongo, Oriki*):** This is not flattery but a ritual invocation. The praise-singer (*imbongi*, *olori*) uses repetitive, often trochaic rhythms, metaphorical lists, and hyperbolic language to "call out" the essence of a person, chief, or deity, summoning their power and history into the present. Zulu *izibongo* for Shaka or contemporary leaders are dynamic, living records of achievement and expectation.
- **The Dirge:** A funeral lament, performed communally. It incorporates call-and-response, repetition of formulaic phrases, and traditional motifs to guide the spirit of the deceased and structure the grief of the living. It is elegy in its most raw and participatory form.
- **The Epic:** A long narrative poem recounting the heroic deeds of a legendary figure or foundational events. The **Sundiata Epic** of the Mali Empire, performed by griots (*jeli*) for centuries, is a prime example. It blends history, myth, and genealogy, preserving cultural identity and values through a masterful combination of narrative, praise, and proverbial wisdom.

POETRY VS. PROSE: A FUNDAMENTAL DISTINCTION

While both use language artistically, poetry and prose differ in their primary operations:

Poetry is **intensive**. It compresses meaning, often saying less to imply more. It is arranged in lines and stanzas, making the **form itself meaningful**. It prioritizes the **connotative** (suggestive, emotional) meaning of words and relies heavily on **figurative language** and **musical devices** (meter, rhyme, alliteration) to create its effect. Its logic is often associative and symbolic. The character is typically a **persona**, a voice crafted for the poem's purpose.

Prose (fiction, essay) is **extensive**. It expands to develop narrative, character, and idea. It is arranged in sentences and paragraphs, a form that is primarily functional for conveying information. It prioritizes the **denotative** (literal, dictionary) meaning of words and uses figurative language **selectively**. Its logic is narrative or expository. Its characters are **personalities** with names and biographies.

In essence, prose is language used to tell a story or build an argument *about* the world. Poetry is language crafted to *become* an experience of the world—a verbal artifact that embodies its own meaning in its very sound and shape. To read poetry is to engage not just with what is said, but with how it is breathed into being on the page and in the ear. This is the anatomy we must understand to appreciate its life.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORM AND CONTENT IN LITERATURE

In literature, form and content are inseparable, symbiotic forces. To claim they can be divorced is akin to separating the dance from the dancer. Content is the what: the raw materials of narrative—the story events, the themes (love, power, injustice), the characters' experiences, and the philosophical questions posed. Form is the how: the architecture, the vehicle, the deliberate selection and arrangement of literary elements that shape and deliver that content. As the Nigerian poet and critic Niyi Osundare asserts, form is "content in a state of aesthetic embodiment." The meaning of a literary work is not discovered in spite of its form, but through and because of it.

ELEMENTS OF FORM & CONTENT:

- **Formal Elements**: Title, genre, structure (plot, acts/chapters), character (their inner lives and morals), setting (as historical/social fact), conflict (the core disagreement), point of view, diction, syntax, imagery, symbolism, tone, style, meter, rhyme, stage directions, dialogue vs. narration.
- **Content Elements**: Theme, subject matter, message, moral, and the raw emotional or intellectual experience.

HOW FORMAL ELEMENTS DELIVER MESSAGE AND DEVELOP MEANING:

1. **Title:** The title is the first formal gatekeeper to content. It sets expectations, frames interpretation, and often introduces a central symbol or irony. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's "**A Grain of Wheat**" takes its title from the Biblical metaphor of dying to be reborn. This formal choice instantly elevates the content—the story of individuals in the Kenyan Mau Mau struggle—to a mythic level, framing their sacrifices as part of a cyclical, regenerative process, shaping our reading of every character's ordeal.
2. **Plot Structure:** The arrangement of events (linear, episodic, circular, in medias res) is a profound formal decision that shapes meaning. A linear plot may suggest order and causality. A circular plot (common in African storytelling, as in **Things Fall Apart**) formally reinforces themes of cyclical time, historical repetition, and the inescapability of certain cultural destinies. The fractured, non-linear plot of a play like Harold Pinter's *Betrayal*, which moves backwards in time, formally mirrors the content: we first see the painful aftermath of an affair and then deconstruct its illusory beginnings, making the drama one of tragic inevitability rather than surprise.
3. **Setting (as a formal construct):** Beyond being mere backdrop, the presentation of setting through descriptive diction, sensory imagery, and symbolic detail is a formal act. The lush, overwhelming, and almost sentient jungle in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (rendered through dense, hypnotic prose) is not just a place; it is a formal manifestation of the content's themes of primordial regression, the unknown, and the psychological "heart" of colonial darkness. Contrast this with the precise, social-realist depiction of a Johannesburg township in Nadine Gordimer's work; the formal choice of stark realism delivers a content of urgent political witness.
4. **Characters & Point of View:** The formal choice of whose consciousness we enter (first-person, third-person limited, omniscient) fundamentally determines content. The entire tragic power of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* relies on the formal use of dramatic irony—a gap between what Oedipus knows and what the audience knows. The content is a story of a man uncovering his identity; the form (irony) is what generates the unbearable tension and catharsis. In novels, the stream-of-consciousness technique (a formal style) directly delivers the content of a character's fragmented, pre-verbal inner world, as in sections of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*.
5. **Diction & Style:** This is the molecular level of form-content fusion. The grand, Latinate diction and complex syntax of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* formally match its cosmic content. Conversely, the spare, unadorned, proverbial diction of Achebe's prose in *Things Fall Apart* is a formal choice that roots the content in the oral tradition and worldview of the Igbo people, making their tragedy feel immediate and authentic. The "Africanization" of English through idiom, rhythm, and syntax in the works of Amos Tutuola or Gabriel Okara (**The Voice**) is a

formal rebellion that carries the content of a unique cultural consciousness.

6. **Conflict (as formal engine):** Conflict is both content (what is fought over) and the primary formal engine of drama. The structuring of conflict—its rising action, climax, and resolution (or lack thereof)—is the skeleton of form. In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the internal conflict (To be or not to be) is given formal expression through the soliloquy, a dramatic convention that allows private thought to become public drama. The unresolved, simmering conflict at the end of many postcolonial plays formally rejects Western notions of cathartic closure, instead delivering a message of ongoing struggle.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MESSAGE AND LESSONS:

The message of a literary work is its central argument, thesis, or consciously intended communicative thrust—often tied to its themes (e.g., "colonialism dehumanizes both colonizer and colonized"). The lesson, however, is more nuanced, personal, and experiential; it is the intellectual, moral, or emotional insight an audience member or reader draws from their engagement with the work as a whole. The message is embedded in the content and emphasized through form; the lesson is the outcome of the audience's dialogue with that fusion.

Form is crucial in this transformation. A heavy-handed, didactic form might deliver a message clearly but stifle a true lesson, as the audience is not allowed to discover it themselves. Great literature uses form to complicate, not simplify. For example, the message of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is a clear allegorical critique of totalitarianism. But the lesson a reader derives might be more profound: a visceral understanding of how language ("All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others") can be formally corrupted to manipulate and control, or a chilling recognition of their own capacity for complicity in such systems. The lesson is earned through the experience of the fable's form.

In African literature, the lesson often transcends the specific political message. Soyinka's **Death and the King's Horseman** certainly convey a message about the clash of traditional duty and colonial imposition. But the profound lesson emerges from the play's formal complexity—its ritual structure, poetic language, and tragic balance. The lesson becomes about the cosmic cost of a ruptured world order, the nature of sacrificial responsibility, and the tragic heroism in maintaining one's cultural integrity in the face of historical violence. The lesson is felt in the gut, not just understood in the mind, because of how the form has orchestrated the content.

Ultimately, form is the deliberate, artistic shaping of experience. It is the lens that focuses the light of content into a beam of specific meaning and feeling. The playwright, poet, or novelist chooses a form not as a decorative afterthought, but as the very means of thinking. The message is the destination the author points to; the form is the arduous, illuminating journey they construct. The lesson is the wisdom the traveler gains from having made that journey themselves, shaped at every turn by the path—the form—they were compelled to walk. In this inseparable dance, literature achieves its power to not just tell us about life, but to formally recreate the experience of living it, in all its complexity, thereby generating meanings and lessons that resonate far beyond the page or the stage.